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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL  
IN  
EARLY CALIFORNIA BAPTIST HISTORY - 1849-1900

A Thesis

submitted in candidacy for the Degree of

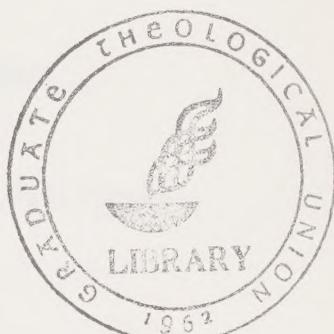
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 January 15 to August 15, October 1  
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the important phases of activity in connection with early Baptist history in California is that which is related to the Sunday schools. The Baptist pioneer leaders came to California with the strong faith and conviction that the kingdom of God is for all men, and to this end they struggled to establish churches, Sunday schools and missions in a country where lawlessness, vice and greed ruled. They firmly believed in the educational and evangelistic power of the Sunday school, and strove to establish a Sunday School in every community.

The purpose of this investigation is to learn of the early beginnings of the Baptist Sunday school movement in California and the progress which was made during the half-century following the organization of the first Baptist Sunday school in 1849. There has been very little written on the subject. One is compelled to seek information from original sources, which are scattered and in a few cases are inconsistent. Nevertheless valuable information has been obtained from the following sources:

1. Annual reports and minutes of the American Baptist Home Mission Society from 1848-1856
2. The Home Mission Record
3. Annual reports and minutes of San Francisco Baptist Association, 1851-1853, 1855-1877, 1879-1880
4. Annual reports and minutes of the Central Baptist Association, 1881-1899.
5. Annual reports and minutes of the Pacific Baptist Association, 1861-1867, 1869-1878, 1884-1898
6. Annual reports and minutes of the California Baptist State Conventions, 1860, 1867-1870, 1874-1876, 1880-1899
7. The available Baptist denominational periodicals published in California dealing with the subject:



- A. The Pacific Banner
- B. The Evangel
- C. The Herald of Truth
- D. The Pacific Baptist (Souvenir Copy, 1899)

8. A number of church histories dealing with the early beginnings of Baptist effort in several localities

- A. Manual of the First Baptist Church, San Jose
- B. History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento
- C. History of the First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco

The first chapter deals with the general history of California and the establishment of Baptist efforts during the early pioneer days. The second chapter is specifically concerned with the history and development of Sunday schools and the outreach of the Sunday school through Mission Sunday schools. This chapter is also concerned with the beginnings of the work of the American Baptist Publication Society in California, which had an important part in the organization of the early Sunday schools. The third chapter is an attempt to learn what kind of curriculum and methods the early Sunday schools used in religious education and the development of the Sunday School Institutes



CHAPTER ONE

BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN CALIFORNIA

1. Bancroft, H. H., Early California Annuals, p. 66

2. Ibid, p. 65

3. Ibid, pp. 12-13, 78-80

## CHAPTER ONE

## BAPTIST BEGINNINGS IN CALIFORNIA

I. The Historical Background of Baptist Work

## 1. The Spanish Occupation

In 1510 Ordonez de Montalva wrote a Spanish romance entitled "Sergas de Esplandian" (Exploits of Esplandion) in which the name California appeared. "California" was a "mythical island on the right hand of the Indies, very near the Terrestrial Paradise."<sup>1</sup> Although an early Spanish explorer named Jimenez discovered lower California and Southern California, he gave no name to the territory. Jimenez discovered Lower California about 1535. Soon after his discovery another explorer, Preciado, a Spaniard, was sent out to explore the territory, and in his diary of that voyage the name California appeared. It was not applied to the whole country, but to a given locality, which was thought to be a group of islands and was referred to as "Las Cali-<sup>2</sup> fornias." As late as 1705 the territory that is now Lower California was considered as a group of islands.

During the next one hundred years there were numerous exploration parties in California lead by adventurous Spaniards, who were interested primarily in finding wealth for the King of Spain. The Spaniards claimed to have reached the 44° latitude on the Pacific Coast thirty years before the arrival of Sir Francis Drake in 1572.<sup>3</sup> Although the Spaniards were continuously exploring the country, they made no attempt to colonize it until the appearance of the Russian fur traders who penetrated California from the north in 1745.

The first group of people who attempted to colonize Lower California and to convert the Indians were the Jesuit missionaries. Driven out

1. Paxson, F. L., *History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893*  
pp. 361-362

of Europe they sought the new continent for refuge and for an opportunity to spread the Gospel. Little attention is given to these heroic missionaries who carefully prepared the way for the future Spanish missionaries and settlers. In 1687 Father Eusebio Kino established his Convent on the Santa Cruz River just five miles south of the present site of Tucson. From this station he operated for the rest of his life, baptizing thousands of Indians and founding small missions and schools. He, too, believed that Lower California was an island, and it was after he had established a mission at Sonora, Lower California, that he discovered Lower California to be a peninsula, and in 1705 he published a map showing that it was connected with the main continent. In 1768 the king of Spain expelled the Jesuits from the continent. During the eighty years of the Jesuit occupancy of the California territory, eighteen missions were established. The Jesuit territory extended from the Gulf of California to the south-eastern section of Arizona. After the Jesuits were banished from the territory, it was taken over by the Dominicans in the southern section while the Franciscans took <sup>1</sup> the northern section.

In 1769 the first Spanish colony was established at San Diego, and at the same time a mission was founded. Gradually the Franciscans extended their territory up the coast, and under the splendid leadership of Junipero Serra, missions were established at strategic points along the coast from San Diego to San Francisco between the years of 1769 and 1776. For fifty years the missions were "the life and blood of California." The Franciscan padres earnestly sought to Christianize the Indians and teach them the techniques of agriculture, cattle raising, leather work and wood craft. Each mission established by the padres was required by the king of Spain to plant trees and raise vegetables, the seeds of which were brought from Spain. Most of the fruit and vegetables now grown in California originated in Spain. The Spaniards introduced the horse, cow and sheep to California. Many of the missions

\* A Spanish and Portuguese measure of length varying in different localities from about 32 inches to about 43 inches.

1. Bancroft, H. H., *Pastoral California*, p. 249

2. Ibid, pp. 250-251

became very wealthy in land, herds of sheep and cattle and the production of wheat. As the missions continued to grow in wealth, the padres became more interested in the financial elements of the mission rather than the converting the Indians to the Christian faith.

The increasing number of Russian fur traders in Northern California caused the king of Spain a great deal of concern. He realized that in order to hold California and to keep it under Spanish rule, there had to be settlements established by and populated with Spaniards. Accordingly he sent settlers, preferably those with families, along the coast as far north as San Francisco and to each he gave a grant of land on condition that they would settle and cultivate it. "To each was given a house-lot, and a tract of land for cultivation, being four fields of 200 varas\* square each, some live-stock, implements, and seed, to be by them gradually repaid in five years from the products of their lands...The settlers were also exempt from taxes and tithes during the entire period of five years."<sup>1</sup> Discharged soldiers with families were given the same privileges. From a comment made by Bancroft it is understood that the land grants were blocked out to form communities of four, and it was the individual responsibility of each community to make whatever land improvements were found necessary, such as building dams, roads and planting trees.<sup>2</sup>

Under the leadership of Governor Felipe de Neve two pueblos were established in 1776. One of these was San Jose de Guadalupe. In 1781 San Jose was reorganized on the same colonization requirements as the larger land grants. From that time on pueblos began to appear up and down the coast of California, and as they became more numerous and more people settled in or near them, the power and influence of the missions began to crumble and with them, the so-called "Golden Age" of California. Life began to take on a different aspect; it was more vivacious, care-free, hard and independent.

1. Bancroft, H. H., History of California, Vol. I, pp.392-430

In 1813 Spain ordered the control of the missions to pass out of the hands of the padres to that of the priests, but the padres were not willing to give up the missions. "In theory it was the duty of the missionaries to convert and instruct the natives, fit them for citizenship and finally turn them over to the care of the regular clergy. The missions were never intended to be permanent institutions." The padres were constantly pleading with the government to give them more time in which to prepare the Indian for life under the leadership of the clergy. In reality, however, the padres were getting exceedingly wealthy and life was very easy. Year by year the land holdings of the missions were being increased. The government on the other hand wanted the land, which the missions held, to colonize and encourage immigration, and thereby built up a great <sup>1</sup> empire. The struggle to obtain the mission land from the padres lasted until the rise of the Mexican government in the 1820's.

## 2. The Mexican Occupation

During the last decade of the existence of the missions, the rise of the Mexican republic was beginning to make itself felt in the life of the people in California. The Mexican republic immediately came into conflict with the kingdom of Spain. In 1822 allegiance was given to Spain by a few loyal Californians, but in 1824 they changed their minds and swore allegiance to Mexico, which proceeded to set up its rule. The governorship of Manuel Victoria in 1831 marks the beginning of the "opera bouffe" wars. These wars continued until 1846 at which time the "Bear Flag" republic was organized, and war with Mexico put an end to the Mexican rule. Before the "Bear Flag" republic was established, each Mexican governor elected was soon driven out of office. It was a period of much conflict and unrest. There are two reasons given for this

1. Paxon, *History of the American Frontier*, pp. 366-368

2. Ibid, pp364-366

unrest, first, the growing dissatisfaction with the Mexican government and second, the jealousy between the northern and southern towns in California. In 1848 California was ceded to the United States and two years later it was admitted into the Union as a free state.<sup>1</sup>

One of the factors which played an important part in breaking down the influence of the Spanish and Mexican rule was the introduction of foreign commerce which was contrary to Spanish law. Ships came from Europe, from Asia and from the Atlantic coast. The Russian fur traders were the first foreign influence. In the spring of each year the traders appeared with their pelts of valuable furs, and in exchange they received food, clothing, implements pertinent to their trade, and money. In 1826 the first American fur traders found their way into Southern California from the region of Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Arizona. They were soon followed by the Hudson Bay Company from the northwest. The first American land migration occurred in 1840. One of the most outstanding early American immigrants, was John A. Sutter who swore allegiance to the Mexican government and in return received 11 square leagues of land near Sacramento. On this land Sutter built a fort, which played an important part in the life of the early American immigrants. As the immigrants appeared at the fort, he sheltered them and gave them supplies in exchange for equipment which they had brought along with them.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. The American Occupation

The discovery of gold in 1848 by John W. Marshall marks the beginning of a new era in the history of California. Both Sutter and Marshall attempted to keep the discovery of gold a secret, but Charles Bennett, who was Sutter's most trusted friend, while on a trip to Monterey accidentally let the news out while engaged in conversation with some friends. It was not long before the thrilling and exciting news of

1. Gray, History of California, pp. 259-266

2. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, pp. 372-373

3. Ibid, pp. 372-373

4.

5. Annual of the Baptist Home Mission Society, Minutes, 1849, p. 69

the discovery of gold at Sutter's mill spread throughout the state and into Oregon and Washington. The first published notice of the discovery of gold appeared in "The Californian", March 15, 1848.<sup>1</sup> There was no government rule at the time of the discovery of gold, and the men in the state of California were accustomed to their own laws which were made to apply to the local situation. Camps sprang up wherever there was the slightest indication of gold, and the law respected in the camps was the law of self-discipline.<sup>2</sup>

The desire for gold and quickly acquired wealth drew people from all parts of the world. People everywhere were flocking to the hills in search of gold. San Francisco previously an active city, for a few weeks became almost entirely desolate, as its population rapidly drifted away to the hills. "The Californian", a local newspaper which might have become a valuable piece of historical material, locked its press and joined the "rush". As the news of gold in California was spread by sailors, soldiers and letters to friends, immigrants soon came to California. After a temporary desolation San Francisco became an active city again, as people began to return when they found mining life hard and inconvenient.<sup>3</sup>

There are several conflicting reports regarding the date when news of gold reached the Atlantic coast. One report states that in September, 1848, gold had been found in California in March.<sup>4</sup> Another report states that news of gold in California did not reach the Atlantic coast until December, 1848.<sup>5</sup> Whichever date is correct, the first overland migration did not occur until the spring of 1849. In order to meet the hardships of pioneer life the immigrants were people with strong physique, courage, faith and an endurance for hardships. They were people of great initiative and ability for self-discipline. However, there were many who

1. Paxson, *History of the American Frontier*, p. 374

2. Bancroft, *History of California*, p. 376

did not measure up to the standards of immigrant life. They did not foresee the hardships, the crude rough life which existed in a country that was entirely unprepared for them, and they lost their courage to remain and help develop a new country. Every day westbound covered wagons met others headed east, and it was a familiar sight at every camp site along the trail to see the newly dug graves of those whose resistance was too frail to withstand the hardships of the early <sup>1</sup> pioneer life.

The 1849 migration was the most heterogeneous that came across the praries. There were farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, politicians and ministers who had been caught in the lure for gold. The population was made up almost entirely of men. Only ten per cent of the total <sup>2</sup> population was women. The total population of California was 92,579.

Not all of the immigrants came to California in covered wagons. Many of them came by way of the Panama zone. They travelled by boat from New York, usually, although a few boats left New Orleans, and upon arriving at the Panama they walked or rode horseback across the isthmus and took a boat to San Francisco. This way of travel to California took less time and was a safer journey, but it was very expensive.

#### 4. The General Situation in 1849

The political situation in California in 1849 was in a state of complete chaos. Paxson describes the situation prior to the appointment of the constitutional committee in the fall of 1849 as follows:

Beyond the limited amount that could be done by voluntary association in the mining districts, by self-help, and by an occasional vigilance committee formed by outraged citizens, the community had no accepted basis of law and order. Men went armed, and the nature of both their business and their play made altercation and combats frequent. There was gold dust, quickly got and quickly spent. There were grog shops, gamblers, and dance halls without number, to prey upon the miners. The men themselves were mostly young and care-free. There were few

1. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, pp.377-378

2. Wheeler, Story of Early California Baptist History, p. 23-24

family ties to make for decency and self-restraint. Yet the community did not disintegrate into anarchy. From the first arrivals, the average immigrant believed in law; and there was a steady development of orderly habits that culminated in a constitutional convention, held at Monterey in September, 1849.<sup>1</sup>

The year the "Forty-Niners" entered California, a constitutional committee was appointed. Word had been sent by President Jackson that the mining camps should draw up their own constitution and then make application to the Union for admission. Accordingly such a committee met at Monterey in September, 1849 and formed the constitution with which California was admitted into the Union the following year. The little capitol at Monterey thus had another flag flying from its flag-pole and this time the flag remained.

From a financial standpoint the most thriving business in California was the exchange of gold for supplies, clothing and implements. The gold nuggets and dust brought in by the miners were in turn exchanged by the merchants with the masters of the ships which came into the Bay at infrequent intervals. O. C. Wheeler in a report given at Sacramento in 1889 before the California Baptist Historical Society depicts the conditions as they existed at the time of his arrival in San Francisco.

After the discovery of gold, early in 1848, and before any communication was had with the commercial ports of Europe or America, the demand for supplies of almost every kind often became oppressive. There were no railways, no telegraphs, no steamships by which they could communicate. No intimation when any vessel would approach the coast. Yet it was of the utmost importance to the merchant, that he obtain the earliest opportunity to board an incoming craft and make such purchases as would in a measure forestall the efforts of his rivals. For this purpose each of several trading houses kept in constant readiness a good boat and set of oarsmen with which they might hope to get on board a vessel that came into harbor and secure the first chance at the cargo.

Wheeler goes on to tell the story of how two merchants each with his boat raced toward a brig which was coming into port. One man reached the brig first and before he had completely boarded it

1. Wheeler, Story of Early Baptist History in California, p. 24

had bought everything on board, paying a deposit of \$100 in gold. <sup>1</sup>

Life in that period was a matter of "dash and enterprise", of quick tempers and strong individual wills and initiatives. People on the other hand, paradoxical as it seems, were easy-going and lovers of freedom. They were unwilling to permit anything to hinder their freedom. Culture and tradition found little part in the every day life in California. It was a rough, hard and crude life, and those who had the physical endurance survived it.

From the time the missions were taken out of the hands of the padres and placed under the influence of the clergy, their influence and power over the people weakened. The religious life degenerated into the lowest forms. The religious faith of the people was built on ritual, fear and superstition. Many a story is told of the early padres who resorted to the aid of guns in order to keep peace within the mission walls. The year that gold was found the churches were almost completely secularized, and their lands were confiscated by the American government. Under the Mexican government the church owned the land granted to it by the government. The adherents to the Catholic faith "were scattered and the priests who remained faithful to their charge were often very poor, and sometimes starving." With the development of the gold mines, cloth chapels were established and in exchange for gold a special blessing was granted. In a very short time the Roman Catholic church was rehabilitated, and by the time Wheeler arrived it had begun to make its influence felt in the life of the people. However, it did not affect them to any great extent, and the social and moral conditions were allowed to degenerate with no interference from the church. No clearer statement of the religious condition of California can be found than in the words of Wheeler.

1. Wheeler, Story of Early Baptist History in California, p. 10

2. Ibid. pp. 12-14

Everything was controlled by the Catholics. Their great day of relaxation and amusement was the Sabbath. After morning 'Mass' the day was largely devoted to such rude and barbarous sports as bull-fighting, bear-baiting, horse-racing, and the exercises of the cock-pit. In all the broad land there was no church organization of any kind. There was no public library, no infirmaries, no asylums for the dumb, blind and helpless; none of these institutions that spring up indigenous to a pure Christianity; not one.<sup>1</sup>

into this semi-barbarous state Wheeler and his wife came and with their courageous spirit and deep faith in the cause of the Master, they proceeded to labor laying the foundations for Baptist work in California.

## II. The Beginning of the Baptist Work

### 1. The Appointment of the First Missionary

Very quietly one Monday morning in November, 1848 a messenger from the American Baptist Home Mission Society entered the room where the regular Monday morning "Minister's Meeting" was being held in the First Baptist Church of New York City. He scanned the faces of the ministers and having found the face he sought walked up to that person and whispered in his ear that he was wanted by Dr. B. M. Hill, the Secretary. Later, the man entered the office of the Home Mission Society and sitting down waited for the Secretary to speak. Dr. Hill immediately and directly stated his case to his visitor. "We want you to go to California as our pioneer missionary." To this statement the visitor replied that his church needed him, and the first interview ended with a positive statement, "No, sir; I will not leave."<sup>2</sup>

For the following fifteen days interviews were carried on by various members of the Society and ministers of the city, but each one received the same negative reply. After fifteen days of earnest and thoughtful prayer, Osgood Church Wheeler, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, gave his decision to go to San Francisco

1. Wheeler, Story of the Early Baptist History of California, p.

2. Ibid, pp. 16-17

as the first Baptist missionary to California. The decision was made on the 16th day of November, 1848, and on December 1, 1848 at 12,0<sup>o</sup>c o'clock midnight, Dr. and Mrs. Wheeler sailed for California. They were the only representatives of a denomination then numbering more than one million members. After more than two months on sea and land they arrived at the point of their destination on February 28, 1949.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Establishment of Baptist Work

It was not an easy nor a favorable situation, though the opportunity was open for the Gospel. There were many obstacles to overcome, which obstacles must have seemed almost overwhelming to Wheeler and his wife.

Wheeler in his report lists five obstacles which retarded the work of the Baptists:<sup>2</sup>

### A. Type of Government

There was no order sustained by legal influences.

### B. State of Religion

The "religion which was Roman Catholicism in its most dilapidated state and lowest forms of superstition and degradation..." The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church was that it "professes to be our friend and elder brother and hence making itself doubly difficult to overcome or remove."

### C. Destitution of Religious Organizations

There was "an absolute destitution of all religious or moral organization or association. In all the broad land there were no vestry meetings, no class meetings, no prayer meetings, no organization of any kind for moral, social or literary improvement... So far as associated effort for the establishment of righteousness was concerned, the whole land was one vast moral desert, without one oasan spot on which the man of God might place his foot."

1. Wheeler, Story of Early Baptist History of California, pp.17-18

#### D. Dearth of Laborers

There was a need for more laborers. "Our want of laborers was not because they did not come to California, for between the 1st of April, 1849, and the 1st of August, 1850, I counted and registered forty-six men, all wearing the vestments and claiming the character of Baptist ministers in good standing who arrived at San Francisco and passed through to the mines, not one of whom would stop for a single day to aid me in rolling to the top of the hill the ball that seemed ready to fall back upon and crush me -- not an hour in the work of the Master."

#### E. Lack of Unity

There was a lack of harmony and unity among the people in San Francisco. The people represented the countries of Europe, Asia and the Western Hemisphere. Wheeler says that "the large majority of those who had come here were men in early middle life, not especially schooled in life's refinements, but of strong, well-developed intellects, full of enterprise and energy and self-assurance, and every one of them firm in his opinions and fixed in his habits, fully convinced that his views were absolutely and invariable correct, and the habits in which he had been reared, if not the only ones, were the best in the world..."<sup>1</sup>

The situation, however, was not quite as dark as it might appear and Wheeler to off-set the obstacles mentioned above has listed some of the favorable aspects of the situation in the establishment of Baptist work.

Before Wheeler had stepped off the boat, he was met by a man who was to play a very important part in the establishment of the First Baptist Church in San Francisco. On the first Day of Wheeler's life in California, C. L. Ross, a wealthy Baptist merchant and a staunch Christian, took charge of his needs and assumed a large portion of his

1. Wheeler, Story of Early Baptist History in California pp. 19-23

2. Ibid, p. 25

3. Ibid, p.25

expenses which amounted to \$500 a month. On March 18, 1849, O. C. Wheeler preached his first sermon in California in the home of this man. Soon, thereafter, regular services were held on the veranda of Ross' home.

C. L. Ross not only undertook the support of Wheeler, but gave large amounts of money toward the building of a church edifice. Wheeler states that a few months after his arrival in California, Ross "assumed the entire financial responsibility of purchasing a lot at ten thousand dollars and erecting a church edifice thereon at an expense of six thousand dollars."<sup>1</sup> The Sunday morning that Wheeler announced that he would preach on the "life and labors of General Taylor, Ross arose in the congregation and said, 'Parson, if you are going to do that, this house must be enlarged, for it is crowded on common occasions.'"<sup>2</sup> And before the next Sunday morning, the church had an addition of 25' x 49', completely finished. Ross was always capable of meeting any situation, and gave freely both of his time and his money. Throughout the struggle in establishing Baptist work in California, Ross took a leading part.

Within a short time following Wheeler's arrival in San Francisco another benefactor of the cause of the Baptists in California came to the support of the new enterprise. After having spent a few weeks in the mines in the spring of 1849, George Inwood, an Englishman, came to San Francisco and gave \$800.00 toward the building of a church edifice. After another three months in the mines, he returned to San Francisco and brought with him \$14,000.00 in gold nuggets.<sup>2</sup> So great was his interest in building a church edifice that he advanced \$5,000.00 (\$2,000.00 as a gift and \$3,000.00 as a loan) to the church to aid in paying for the church edifice and lot.<sup>3</sup> It was not long before the church had accumulated enough money to build the much needed church edifice.

The first Baptist church of California was organized in July, 1849 and before the end of the month the church edifice was completed and

1. Pacific Baptist, May 24, 1899, Souvenir Number, p. 17

dedicated. In the Pacific Baptist for May 24, 1899, an interesting account is given concerning the charting and founding of the First Baptist Church of San Francisco and of California.

The church was constituted July, 1849, adopting the New Hampshire Articles of Faith and Covenant. The church began its existence with six members; Rev. O. C. Wheeler and his wife, Elizabeth H. Wheeler, from Jersey City church, New Jersey; Charles L. Ross and Emily Ross, Laight-street church, New York; Lemuel P. Crane, Galway, New York; and William Lailie, Columbia, South Carolina. This little flock believed that they had a future as a church. This is shown by the fact that on July 10th, they began the erection of the first house of worship, on Washington Street, now in the heart of Chinatown. The first Protestant house of worship in California was a humble structure thirty by fifty feet, built of rough lumber and cotton cloth. Including the lot it cost the pretty sum of \$16,000.00...The church soon began to grow...The first baptism occurred on October 21st, when a brother was baptized in the bay at North Beach. The church became self-supporting November., 1849, the pastor's salary being fixed at \$10,000.00 a year. This important step was taken when it was less than four months old...It is an interesting historical fact, that the first free public school in San Francisco was opened in the building of the First Baptist Church in December, 1849. (Under the direction of Professor J. C. Pelton) Thus at the Golden Gate as on Massachusetts bay, the Protestant and the public school were found hand in hand.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually the influence of Wheeler and his wife found its way into the lives of military men and politicians, miners and farmers, Europeans and Asiatics, and others who came in contact with them, and who learned to have a deep respect for and admire the missionaries' sincere efforts to improve the social, moral and religious conditions in San Francisco.

The second Baptist church in California was organized while Wheeler was on his vacation in San Jose. Wheeler arrived in San Jose, May 15, 1850. He spent the day visiting several Baptist families and discussing with them the possibility of establishing a Baptist church. The idea was favorably received. At three o'clock, Sunday afternoon, May 19, 1850 Wheeler met with a group of friends in the home of one of the group. Wheeler read to them the "summary of faith" which had been

1. The Home Mission Record, Vol. I, No. 12, p. 45, Col. 1
2. Ibid, Vol. II, No. 5, p. 17, Col. 1
3. The Manual of the First Baptist Church, San Jose, published 1913, p. 1
4. History of the First Bspptist Church, Sacramento, California, September 14, 1850 - September 14, 1835, p. 1 see also The Evangel, 1/3/67, Vol. X, No. 1, Cols. 5-6
5. Pacific Baptist, May 24, 1899, Souvenir Number, p. 18
6. History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, California September 14, 1950 - September 14, 1935, p. 1
7. Pacific Baptist, May 24, 1899, Souvenir Number, p. 18
8. History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, California, p. 1

adopted by the church of San Francisco. The group agreed to this summary and "resolved to take the name of the 'First Baptist Church of Christ in San Jose.'"<sup>1</sup> After they had elected their deacons and church clerk, Wheeler proceeded on behalf of the denomination to extend to them the hand of fellowship which was followed by a communion service.<sup>2</sup> Following the service Wheeler announced that he would supply the church once a month until they were able to secure a regular pastor. In the fall the church secured Rev. L. O. Grennell, who with his wife arrived in San Jose, October 17, 1850. They had been appointed missionaries to California by the American Baptist Home Mission Society.<sup>2</sup> The first building was located on the northwest corner of Santa Clara and Third Streets. The church dedicated the building<sup>3</sup> for worship sometime in December of 1850.

Four months after the establishment of the church at San Jose, the third church of California was founded at Sacramento. It is recorded "that as early as November, 1849, a number of Baptists organized themselves into a church or society, but having no under-shepherd to lead and instruct them, soon disbanded."<sup>4</sup> The first Baptist minister in Sacramento was Rev. John Cook, who maintained a boarding house on "I" Street.<sup>5</sup> He preached, occasionally in the "grove", which was "a block of land between Third and Fourth, 'J' and 'K' streets, and co-operated with the ministers of other denominations, thus 'lending his aid to the undenominational meetings of that day.'"<sup>6</sup>

In September, 1850, Wheeler came to Sacramento and securing the aid of Judge E. J. Willis, Rev. John Cook and Rev. J. W. Caspen and one other person,<sup>7</sup> gathered a number of Baptists for a meeting. They met "in the residence of Judge E. J. Willis, on 'H' Street between Sixth and Seventh."<sup>8</sup> At this meeting, which was held on Saturday night, September 14, 1850, the First Baptist Church of Sacramento was

1. History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, California, p. 1
2. Ibid, p. 1
3. Home Mission Record, August, 1850, Vol. 1, No. 12, p.45, Col.2.
4. The Pacific Baptist, Souvenir Number, May 24, 1899, p. 17
5. San Francisco Association Minutes, 1851, p. 14

organized. They elected their officers and called Rev. J. W. Casper to be their pastor. "The following day public services were held in the Court House, then on 'I' Street, between Fourth and Fifth, where Rev. O. C. Wheeler preached the sermon of recognition."<sup>1</sup> The church continued to hold public services in the Court House until they dedicated the church edifice on March 9, 1851.<sup>2</sup>

At the time the San Jose Church was established, Wheeler went to Santa Clara to survey the situation with respect to establishing Baptist work there and to hold a meeting.<sup>3</sup> On June 15th, the second meeting of the San Jose church, mission work was established at Santa Clara.<sup>4</sup> Before the second meeting of the San Francisco Baptist Association on March 1, 1851, a church had been established at Santa Clara and Rev. L. O. Grennell was dividing his time between this church and the one at San Jose.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. History of the Baptist Associations, Northern California

Slowly, the Baptist work spread out from San Francisco to other sections of the state. Churches were organized wherever there was a need. A number of churches were established in localities which at the time seemed to give evidence of permanency but after a few years and in some cases a few months, the church disbanded and the members scattered. Other churches were for a number of years strong churches and sometimes lead other churches around them, but as the state became more organized and populated and centers of greater activity developed they gradually lost their influence and died out completely.

In the East and middle West churches in a given locality organized themselves into Associations, which exerted a great deal of influence in the churches. The value of the Associations lay in the fact that at the annual meetings there was an opportunity for exchange of ideas, inspiration and encouragement in the thought that other churches were

1. Fleming, Sandford, Personal Interview

struggling to carry on the work of the Kingdom and were meeting the same kind of problem. In California the Association meeting was even more important than in the eastern part of America. In the west the distances from one city to another were greater than in the east; although attempts were made at various times to establish newspapers, there was a dearth of current reading material; there was lack of culture which the east had developed over a number of years; the east had certain customs and traditions which were respected, but in the west they were forgotten or caste aside; often times there a lack of the bare necessities of life. All of these things helped to make life in California hard and difficult to live. It is little wonder that O. C. Wheeler in the fall of 1850 called a meeting of the representatives from the three churches of California to consider the advisability of organizing an Association.

On September 25, 1850 representatives from the three churches San Francisco, San Jose and Sacramento met in Wheeler's study to discuss plans for the organization of Baptist churches into an Association. They arranged for the first Baptist meeting to be held in the First Baptist Church of San Francisco, October 25-28, 1850. At the meeting in September plans were made for the adoption of a constitution to be presented at the meeting in October. The constitution was presented and adopted and arrangements were made to hold a meeting of the Association the following year in Sacramento on June 13-16.<sup>1</sup> The second meeting was destined to have considerable influence upon upon the development of Baptist leadership in California. It called together a number of pioneer Baptist leaders and for a few days they were able to unite their thinking in a common cause. No doubt, it gave courage to the delegates to know that there were others in this section of the country striving to uphold the ideals of the Master in a country that was governed by lawlessness, greed and vice.

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1851, p. 8

2. Ibid., 1852, p. 8

3. Semi-Centennial History of the Clear Lake Baptist Association  
of California, 1870-1920, p. 10

4. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1867, p. 16 see also  
San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1861, pp. 3-6, 13

The total membership of the three churches represented at the second meeting of the Association in 1851 was 87. The following year the Association met at San Jose and five churches were represented. The total church membership had grown to 158. Each year as the Association met the number of churches and church membership increased until it was deemed necessary for Associations of churches to be organized in areas which made it more convenient for the churches to send their delegates.

The second Baptist Association organized in California was the Pacific Baptist Association. It was organized in 1857, and had nine churches composing its membership. The territory of the Association included the northwest territory of California extending from Nevada City in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west.<sup>3</sup> The same year the Pacific Association was organized, the Sacramento Valley Association was organized with fifteen churches composing its membership. In 1861 the Sacramento Valley Association consolidated with the San Francisco and Pacific Associations. There were twenty-eight churches in the Sacramento Valley Association, but the leaders felt that it would be better if the churches could be put in the other two Associations as they were near or in the territory. This reorganization of the Associations made the Pacific Association the largest in territory, but not in church membership. The total church membership of the Sacramento Valley Association was four hundred persons.<sup>4</sup>

Slowly the Sacramento River valley was being settled as more people migrated and cultivated the land. During the early beginnings of American immigration, the territory was the scene of much placer mining, but as the gold began to disappear the miners left and the farmers came in to reclaim the land for farming. By 1867 three Baptist churches had been organized and had organized themselves in the Sacramento River Association. The total membership of the three churches was thirty-eight. The area of the Sacramento River Association included part of

1. Semi-Centennial History of the Clear Lake Baptist Association of California, 1870-1920, p. 10

2. Ibid, p. 12

3. Ibid, p. 13

the former Sacramento Valley Association north of Sacramento and Yolo  
 1  
 counties.

The Clear Lake Baptist Association was the fifth Association organized in the northern California area. In the history of this Association written by A. J. Sturtevant the beginning of the Association was in 1870. He has written an interesting account concerning the organization. He states that on

April 22, 1870, representatives of the Baptist churches of Lake and Mendocino Counties met at Ukiah, to consider the advisability of organizing a new Association. In pursuance of a resolution passed at that time, the delegates of the several Baptist churches of these counties, met at Lake Port, October 7, 1870, for the purpose of organizing. The organization was there effected under the name of the Clear Lake Baptist Association and a four-day program including much preaching was carried through.<sup>2</sup>

The total membership of the six churches represented at the first meeting of the Association was 154. There was one church which did not report its membership. The total number of ministers in the Association was eleven. "The Kelsey Creek church with fourteen members had no pastor but sent four ministers along with the other delegates... Many of the ministerial brethren of those days were farmer-preachers. They had had but limited educational advantages, but they were not lacking in strength of conviction or in evangelistic fervor.<sup>3</sup>

The Eastern Association was organized about 1872 and included the following churches, Loyalton, Goose Lake and Surprise Valley.

The Central Association was organized in 1880 and included nearly all of the churches formerly in the San Francisco Baptist Association. Later, in the early part of the twentieth century, the name was changed to San Francisco Bay Baptist Association.

The churches in the San Joaquin Valley had a difficult problem to solve. The cities were widely scattered and the territory large, but in 1881 the churches in the central part of the Valley organized

1. Souvenir Pamphlet of the 20th Century Baptist Conference,  
December 5, 1900, pp.54-56; see also  
Los Angeles Baptist Association, 1909, p. 37

2. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1870, p.13

an Association under the title of Tulare Baptist Association. In 1883 the Association had five churches and a church membership of 102.

In 1893 the South Central Association organized. It was a branch of the Central Association and included the churches along the coast from Mt. View as far south as Santa Clara and San Jose. Later, it became known as the San Jose Baptist Association.

From the central portion of the San Joaquin Valley to the southern part is a distance of almost two hundred miles. The churches in the southern part felt that it would be well for them to organize and accordingly in 1892 they organized the Western Baptist Association and it included the churches in and around Bakersfield.

#### 4. History of the Baptist Associations, Southern California

Baptist beginnings in Southern California began soon after the founding of the First Baptist Church, San Francisco. The first Baptist church of Southern California was organized in El Monte under the leadership of Rev. John A. Freeman in 1853, and for thirteen years this was the only church of the Baptist denomination in the southern part of the state. The second Baptist church was founded in 1866 at San Bernardino. Two years later three churches were organized at Los Nietos, <sup>1</sup> Rincon and San Antonio.

First Association organized in Southern California was the Los Angeles Baptist Association in 1869 and had five churches represented in its membership. The total church membership was 119. This Association <sup>2</sup> included the whole Southern portion of the state.

At a meeting held in the First Baptist Church of Santa Barbara in 1877, the Santa Barbara Association was organized with six churches. At the annual meeting of the Los Angeles Association in 1891, it was

1. Souvenir Pamphlet of the 20th Century Baptist Conference,  
December 5, 1900, pp. 54-56

found that the forty churches included in the Los Angeles Association, were too widely scattered and the distances too great for the delegates to attend, and it was decided that three associations should be organized. The original Los Angeles Baptist Association retained the name and included those churches in the Los Angeles County and the Ontario Church. The San Diego Association included the churches in the San Diego County. The Santa Ana Valley Association was the third one and included the <sup>1</sup> churches in the three counties of Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside.



## CHAPTER TWO

### HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT



## CHAPTER TWO

## HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

The Baptist Sunday school movement in California began at a time in religious education history when the Sunday school was beginning to receive recognition and serious consideration by the religious leaders and educators of America. The religious leaders saw the importance of religious instruction given during the early years of childhood, and as the parents were failing to give religious instruction to their children the leaders were urging the churches undertake the task of religious education.

In California the religious leaders quickly saw the need of religious education in a country where traditions and customs were soon forgotten and particularly in a country where people lived in widely scattered communities. The leaders strove to establish Sunday School in nearly every community in the state. In many places Union Schools were organized, and often times they became a permanent part of the community and would continue to instruct the children long after denominational churches had been organized. Through the Sunday school history of California there was constant reference to the importance of the Sunday school in the life of a church and community. In most cases, however, where there was a Baptist church, a Sunday school was organized; there are a few instances where the Sunday school was established first and the church was organized later.

The Sunday school movement in California was a slow process, and at times it must have seemed exceedingly discouraging to the leaders who were striving to develop Christian communities. One cannot help but admire and respect the courageous spirit of these early pioneers who believed in the Cause of the Master.

1. Ferrier, Pioneer Church Beginnings and Educational Movements in California, p. 31

2. Pacific Baptist, Souvenir Number, May 24, 1899, p. 17

## I. Development of the Baptist Sunday School Movement

### 1. Baptist Sunday School Beginnings

Soon after O. C. Wheeler arrived in San Francisco a survey of the field was begun. Wheeler preached his first sermon in early March and at about the same time preparations were made to hold a Sunday school in the home of C. L. Ross. Several parents had agreed to send their children, but when the appointed hour arrived to begin the school

only one boy appeared for two teachers -- Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler. This continued for four Sundays. On the fourth Sunday there were only six persons in attendance at the preaching service. In the afternoon Mr. Ross said to Mr. Wheeler: 'I guess you'll have to give this up, parson!' 'Give what up?' asked the preacher. 'Oh, this preaching and Sunday school' was the reply. 'It's no use, the pressure is too strong, you can't make it go.' The reply was: 'I will give up the effort in your house if you say so, but I shall get another place. I didn't come here to give up but to succeed, and I shall do it or die.'

Mr. Ross' reply was: 'That isn't what I mean; you are welcome to the house. If you have the spunk to go ahead I can stand it; go ahead, I am with you.' Four weeks later the three rooms in the house and the long veranda were filled with people at the preaching service and there were forty scholars in the Sunday school.<sup>1</sup>

Through the persistent efforts of Wheeler the Sunday school was officially established on May 27, 1849, and there was an enrollment of six pupils. Toward the end of July when the church edifice was built and dedicated the enrollment of the Sunday school had grown to one hundred and twenty-seven pupils.<sup>2</sup>

It is not possible to learn the date of the establishment of the Sunday school at San Jose, but it is possible that one had been organized before or at the time Wheeler went down to San Jose to help found the church in 1850. A Sunday school was held at the time L. O. Grennell arrived in the fall of 1850. In a letter to friends in the east Mrs.

1. The Home Mission Record, Vol. 3, No. 17, Col. 1, p. 1, 1/51

2. Pacific Baptist, Souvenir Number, May 24, 1899, p. 17

3. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1851, p. 15

4. Ibid, p. 9

5. Ibid, p. 9

Grennell states that a small Sunday school was held in a small room in which two men teachers were attempting to instruct 14 boys and girls. She was at once given the class of girls to teach.<sup>1</sup>

When the San Jose church was organized in May, 1850, Wheeler<sup>2</sup> went to Santa Clara to make a survey of the field. During his visit to San Jose in June of the same year, he returned to Santa Clara and under his guidance a Mission Sunday school was established. The following year the Sunday school developed into the Santa Clara church, shared the leadership of Rev. L. O. Grennell with the San Jose Church. The church began with eight charter members who were residents of Santa Clara and who had been dismissed from the San Jose church to organize.<sup>3</sup>

There was a Sunday school in connection with the Sacramento church, but it is not possible to learn the date of its organization from the historical material available. When the San Francisco Association met in 1851, the church reported a Sunday school to be in progress.

Each of the three churches, San Francisco, San Jose and Sacramento, represented in the second meeting of the San Francisco Baptist Association in 1851 had a small Sunday school. The San Francisco Sunday school had 96 pupils enrolled and of this number 30 were boys, 40 were girls, and 12 adults were enrolled in the Bible class. The Sunday school was organized with a superintendent, H. E. Lincoln; a secretary and a librarian who had charge of the 200 volumes in the Sunday school library.<sup>4</sup> There was a total of 11 teachers, 7 men and 4 women.

The San Jose Sunday school had a total of 37 members and of this number 10 were boys, and 20 were girls. There were six teachers, 3 men, and 3 women. James Appleton, superintendent, was the only administrative officer. The Sunday school library consisted of 100 volumes.<sup>5</sup>

The Sacramento Sunday school was the smallest of the three with a

1. Fleming, Sandford (Personal interview)
2. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1851, p. 9

3. Fleming, op. cit.

total enrollment of 27; 3 boys, 7 girls and 15 adults. They had one teacher and a superintendent, Judge E. J. Willis, who later was ordained and became the first pastor of the First Baptist Church in <sup>1</sup> Oakland. Although this was the smallest Sunday school reported, the <sup>2</sup> library was the largest with 300 volumes.

## 2. Constant Reference to the Importance of the Sunday School

The importance of the Sunday school in the development of the Baptist cause in California was readily recognized by early pioneers. At the first meeting of the San Francisco Baptist Association held in San Francisco on October 25-27, 1850, the first Sunday school committee was appointed. The Committee was composed of the following members: "Rev. L. O. Grennell, the pastor of the San Jose Church; <sup>3</sup> the Honorable E. J. Willis, mentioned above; and E. Rogers. Each year a different committee was appointed and who met during the annual meeting of the Association and who made recommendations to the assembly regarding the work of the Sunday school.

The significance attached to the Sunday school is indicated by the constant recommendations of the Sunday school committee, who were vitally interested in the progress of the Sunday school movement in California. The second Sunday school committee composed of Henry E. Lincoln, superintendent of the Sunday school of the First Baptist Church of San Francisco; Rev. Gershom B. Day of Sacramento; and Rev. Peter Woodin, Central Square, New York, who apparently had not yet established residence but was invited to serve on the committee, made the following report with regard to the importance of the Sunday school:

The Sabbath School has been well styled the 'nursery of the church' and it is here that with the blessing of God her future hosts are to be trained and brought forth 'strong men in Christ Jesus.'

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1851, p.22

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1851, p.22

2. Ibid, 1852, p. 21

The history of the church for several years past shows that a large portion of the additions to her number has been drawn from the Sabbath School; and those thus gathered in, have made her most efficient members. To us, therefore, it is of the utmost importance, that a right and diligent use be made of this instrumentality, and it is encouraging, also, to notice the success that has followed the efforts put forth in this department already.

One of the best means of gathering a school, is to visit, familiarly, the parents and children, and gaining the confidence of the one, the hearts of the other will soon be enlisted. Draw in all classes, make all feel at home. The best talent and most devoted and active piety of the church is demanded in this service. The field is wide, and broad enough to employ all, and yet there is room for more. No labor here bestowed can be lost: the work is the Lord's; the seed sown is Gospel seed, and the Spirit of the Lord will water and ripen it to a glorious harvest.

We would most earnestly, therefore, commend the cause, as deserving and claiming the untiring efforts of the churches, their sympathies and their prayers: and recommend a vigorous prosecution of the work where it is commenced, and an extension of it to the vacant fields within your limits. 1

There is no organization which can operate without a set of rules, and the Sunday school committee discovered that it would be well for them to have certain rules and duties. At the third meeting of the San Francisco Association in June, 1852, a resolution was adopted which stated the duties of the Sunday school committee. It was declared that there should be appointed

a committee of five, to be called the Sabbath School Committee. To this Committee shall be intrusted the supervision of the Sabbath School operations in the State for the ensuing year. It shall be the duty of this Committee, by letters, and such other means as it may deem best, to encourage and aid the formation of Sabbath Schools at all feasible points in our State, and in other ways further the interest of this department of Christian enterprise.<sup>2</sup>

The early pioneers felt that the Sunday School was important both to the evangelistic and educational life of the church. The Sunday school offered the opportunity for the instruction of children in the

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1855, pp. 7-8

2. Ibid, 1856, p. 6-7

Bible and the great truths about the Christian faith. It further gave opportunity to win the child for Jesus Christ. In the report of the Sunday school committee in 1855 it was stated that the Sunday school teacher was "brought into immediate and direct contact with the mind and hearts of his pupils and in faithful and affectionate intercourse can impart a knowledge of God's holy word which cannot fail of exerting a most important influence upon them and may result in their early conversion to Christ." From the committee's viewpoint the Sunday school was very important as it supplemented the lack of religious instruction in the home. In the report the committee urged the pastors to take a more active interest in the Sunday school classes and to show their interest by occasionally visiting them, encouraging the parents who were members of the church to participate in the activities of the Sunday school.

In the report of the Sunday school committee in 1856 the Sunday school was referred to as an important agency in the evangelization of the world. It was the task of the Sunday school teachers to morally educate the children as "the ungodly conduct of the parents forbids the hope." The committee felt that the "pious" parents needed the aid of the Sunday school in the moral and religious training of their children. "Here is a field in which every Christian, weak or strong, may find full scope for his efforts to win souls to the Savior. While ministers proclaim the Gospel to the understanding heart of the developed man, the Sabbath school teacher aims to prepare the youthful hearts to receive the good seed of the kingdom, that when their work is done, the sower and reaper may rejoice together."<sup>2</sup>

The religious situation in California in 1862 was not very favorable toward the growth of the church or the Sunday School movement. Persons coming from the eastern states failed to affiliate themselves

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1862, p. 12

2. Ibid, . 1866, p. 15-16

3. Ibid, 1866, p. 15-16

with the churches; they were not permanent in residence; and there was a lack of ministers and leaders who were willing to lead the people in a vital Christian life. The Sunday school committee in its report set forth certain recommendations which they felt warrented consideration by the Association.

Resolved, 1st, That we regard the Sunday School as a principal source of religious education of our people.

Resolved, 2d, That the demoralizing tendencies of passing events in our land demand unusual effort on the part of the Church to sustain the Sunday School as a fundamental means of counteracting such tendencies.

Resolved, 3d, That we regard with pain solicitude the growing tendency to dispense with the recitation of committed portions of Scripture as a regular exercise in our Sabbath Schools.

Resolved, 4th, That the peculiar temptations and exposures of the children and youth of our land, at the present day, render it a duty of indescribably solemn import on the part of parents and teachers in our Sunday Schools, to make constant and special application of Divine truth to the hearts and consciences of the pupils.

The continued annual reports of the Sunday school committee were beginning to have some effect in the thought life of the churches. The committee in 1866 reported an increase of interest in the Sunday school. The general attitude toward the Sunday school was that it was an institution of correction rather than of education.<sup>2</sup> The committee felt that the Sunday school was not beginning instruction early enough in the life of the child. "We do not begin our instruction soon enough; we do not have it enough for our earnest aim, that the child, even in its earliest years, be brought to Jesus." The committee in the same report stressed the importance of adult education in the Sunday school.<sup>3</sup>

After the Civil War and continuing until the end of the nineteenth century a great deal of emphasis was laid upon denominationalism. Each

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1868, p.14

denomination was striving to emphasize the importance of a person being thoroughly indoctrinated in its beliefs. This thought is brought out in the report of the Sunday school committee in 1868. The report was dealing with the subject of Union Sunday Schools which were established by the early pioneers and were to continue only as long as there was a small group of people, but when a sufficient number of people of a given denomination had settled in a locality, they were expected to form a denominational Sunday school. Apparently there were a number of Baptist churches that were still sponsoring the Union schools. To make the Sunday school more Baptist the following suggestions were submitted for consideration by the Association:

1. That earnest efforts be made to enlist our whole membership in the work of the Sabbath Schools.
2. That we ask Baptists to withdraw from all so-called Union Sabbath Schools, since it is evident that their very existence depends upon a compromise of truth.
3. That isolated families of our faith be recommended to form and conduct Baptist Sabbath Schools in their own households.
4. That our libraries be replenished as much as possible from books of our Publication Society, that compromise books be wedged out, and that the greatest care should be bestowed in the selection of libraries in order to secure the great aim of our schools, viz., the conversion of children, and their education in the principles and practice of 'the faith once delivered to the Saints.' 1

Prior to 1874 the importance of the Sunday school was thought of in terms of an evangelizing agency in the local community. Now emphasis was laid on the fact that the Sunday school had a larger outreach, and a great deal of thought was given to the missionary outreach of the Sunday school. It was felt that the instruction of the Sunday school was the primary work of Christian education. For these reasons the

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, 1874, p.
2. Sweet, W. W., The Story of Religion in America, Ch. XVI
3. California Baptist State Convention Minutes, 1871, p. 12
4. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1856, p. 7
5. Ibid, 1852, p. 2

Sunday school committee felt that the Sunday school movement was important enough to "receive more distinct attention in the annual meetings of the Association."<sup>1</sup>

## II. The Missionary Outreach of the Sunday School Movement

### 1. Mission Sunday Schools

The Baptist effort in California began during a period of great missionary zeal, which had started in the early part of the nineteenth century and continued almost to the end of the century. The period was distinguished by the development of missionary organizations and extensive outreach, both on the foreign and home fields.<sup>2</sup> In 1848 and as late as 1871 California was considered a mission field.<sup>3</sup> The early pioneer Baptist leaders, coming from a section of the country intensely interested in the missionary cause, were vitally alive to the missionary opportunities in California and as the need presented itself, recommendations for the establishment of mission work were made.

The first recommendation for the establishment of a missionary enterprise of the Sunday School was made in 1856. The Sunday school committee of the San Francisco Baptist Association made the following recommendation regarding Branch Sunday Schools, which were in reality mission schools:

Resolved, that we recommend to the members of churches connected with this Association, the establishment of Branch Sabbath Schools in those localities in which children are found, who do not on account of distance, attend the school already organized.<sup>4</sup>

The first record of a Sunday school of this type established in California is that of the Mission Sunday School in Santa Clara in 1850.<sup>5</sup>

To stimulate interest in the home mission outreach, it was recommended by the Sunday school committee in 1859 that a missionary organization be established in each school: "Resolved, That this Association recommend to the churches to establish a Domestic Missionary

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, 1859, p. 12

2. Pacific Baptist Association, 1861, p. 9

3. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1861, p. 27

4. The Evangel, Vol. 7, No. 3, P. Col. 4, 2/4/64

5. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1874, p. 31; see also  
History of the First Baptist Church, San Francisco, 1848-74, pp.30

6. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1862, p. 17

7. Ibid, 1874, p. 32

8. Ibid, 1866, p. 23; see also  
Ibid, 1874, p. 32

9. Ibid, 1867, p. 18

Organization in each school."<sup>1</sup>

Constant references and recommendations were made to the churches to establish either Mission or Branch Sunday Schools. In 1861 the Sunday School committee of the Pacific Baptist Association made several recommendations to the churches and included the following recommendations concerning Mission schools: that "every school of sufficient strength should watch for and readily improve any opportunity to establish Branch Mission Schools in adjacent districts."<sup>2</sup>

Twelve years after the organization of the First Baptist Church of San Francisco a mission school was established under the auspices of this church. The church supported a missionary and sustained the expense of the mission school.<sup>3</sup> Sometime in the year of 1860 the church employed Rev. S. B. Morse, who was the first city missionary in San Francisco. Three years later Morse spent part of his time in the city and part of his time at San Pablo where a chapel had been built by the church.<sup>4</sup>

Rev. H. A. Sawtelle became city missionary in December, 1861 and spent most of his time at the missionary chapel on Fifth Street. His salary of \$100.00 per month was paid by the First Baptist Church.<sup>5</sup> In 1862 the Sunday school report showed an attendance of 464 which included the Sunday school of the First Baptist Church and the mission school.<sup>6</sup> Two years later the church established a second mission school on Post Street near Larkin Street and the Rev. J. P. Ludlow was put in charge.<sup>7</sup> The Post Street Mission in 1868 was organized into the Tabernacle Church.<sup>8</sup>

In 1867 the First Church reported two mission Sunday schools which had been established in destitute portions of the city.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the First Church of San Francisco was aware to the need for mission work is easily seen in the foregoing statements, and in the fact that as late

1. The Herald of Truth, 2/15/84

2. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1891, p. 24

3. Ibid. p. 26

4. Cathecart, William, The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p. 1056; see also  
History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, p. 2

as 1884 the church established a Mission Sunday School on the corner of Folsom and Eighth Streets. Mr. Brown was superintendent of the School and presumably was a member of the First Baptist Church. No further reference is made concerning this mission, and apparently it was conducted with volunteer leadership.<sup>1</sup>

As the need for Sunday school work in destitute places grew, more Mission Sunday Schools were established. In 1891 there were twenty-<sup>2</sup> two Mission Schools in California.

Where Mission Sunday Schools were organized in the urban districts, Home Sunday Schools were developed in the rural areas. A Home Sunday School was held in the home of a neighbor who happened to live in a center of a given locality. The Home Sunday school developed in areas where people were living on large ranches or in the mountains which were too far from the nearest town or village. A Sunday school of this description was held in the home of Mrs. H. R. Crocker of Sequoia, Tuolumne County and mention was made of this Home Bible Sunday School in the report of the Sunday school committee in 1891.<sup>3</sup> Contacts with the rural people on large ranches and in the mountains were made through the State Missionary, the Publication Society Colporter, Chapel Cars or Gospel Wagons.

## 2. Chinese Mission Schools

Much thought has been given to the Chinese work in San Francisco, and the work done among that race is often referred to as the first effort of Baptists to evangelize them. Early pioneer efforts among the Chinese were established in Sacramento in 1854, under the leadership of Rev. J. Lewis Shuck, who had recently returned to the United States from Canton, China where he had been a missionary for seventeen years.<sup>4</sup> Shuck arrived in California in April, 1854 as a missionary to the Chinese under the Domestic Board of Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention. At

1. History of the First Baptist Church of Sacramento, p. 2 see also  
San Francisco Baptist Association, 1855, p. 15  
Pacific Baptist, Souvenir Copy, 1899, p. 18
2. Cathcart, William, The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p. 1056
3. The Evangel, Vol. VII, No. 4, 2/18/64, p. 3, Col. 1; see also  
The History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, p. 2
4. The History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, p. 2
5. Ibid, p. 2; see also  
California Baptist State Convention Minutes, 1860, p. 15
6. History of the First Baptist Church, Sacramento, p. 2; see also  
Minutes of a Baptist Convention, 1860, p. 18
7. Cathcart, William, The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p. 1056
8. Survey and report of the First Baptist Chinese Church, San Francisco  
published 1922, p.

the time of Shuck's arrival the First Baptist Church of Sacramento was without a pastor. He was invited "to occupy the pulpit, which he did from April to August, 1854, at which time a call was issued to him which he accepted. <sup>1</sup> "Here he spent seven years, discharging the double duties of missionary and pastor of Sacramento church."<sup>2</sup>

A year later he bought some property from J. H. McKee on the west side of Sixth Street between "G" and "H" Streets at a cost of <sup>3</sup> \$300.00. The same year a chapel was erected which became known as the "Chinese Bethel Chapel". During the pastorate and missionary ministry of Shuck fifteen Chinese were baptized into membership of the First Church. The first Chinese baptized was Ah Mooey, "who was baptized September 2, 1855, said to be the first Chinese baptized in California. On November 2, 1856, he was given a license to preach. This also is the first instance of a license being given <sup>4</sup> to a Chinese."

"On January 1, 1860, Rev. Shuck resigned but spent the following twelve months in doing missionary work in and around Sacramento, and acting as pastor of the Chinese church."<sup>5</sup> The Tseay Tih Baptist Church was organized early in the year and "they held their first <sup>6</sup> communion service on the last Lord's Day of January this year."

Shuck returned to Barnwell Court-House, South Carolina where he <sup>7</sup> remained until his death in 1863. There is no question that a good deal of the interest stimulated in the Chinese was the result of the missionary efforts of Shuck, but following his departure, the work among the Chinese in Sacramento gradually disappeared. The primary cause for the lack of interest in Chinese was the Chinese <sup>8</sup> themselves as they were constantly moving from place to place, and the secondary cause was due to the lack of leadership among the Caucasians in stimulating interest in the Chinese.

1. Survey and Report of the First Chinese Church, San Francisco, p.

2. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1870, pp. 18-19

3. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1876, p. 7

4. Ibid. 1870, p. 25

The first recorded mission work among the Chinese in San Francisco was in 1870 at which time the Rev. John Francis was appointed as Missionary to the Chinese under the American Baptist Home Mission Society. When Francis began his work in April, 1870, there were 116,350 Chinese on the Pacific Coast. 50,000 Chinese lived in California and of this number 18,500 lived in San Francisco. Shortly after Francis began his work Rev. R. H. Graves, pastor of the Baptist church in Canton, and Fung Séun Nam, a licensed minister also of the Canton Church arrived in San Francisco and helped Francisco. Graves did not remain long, but Fung remained and was at once appointed as a missionary of the Home Mission Society. Fung helped Francis a great deal and did most of the preaching. He preached three times each Sunday to large congregations. Once on the street he preached to a congregation of from 700 to 1500 people. Fung was constantly visiting Chinese Sunday Schools and holding meetings in his rooms. It was the hope of the workers that the denomination might purchase the "First Baptist House of Worship" which was located on Washington Street for the permanent use of a "Chinese Mission House." The building was located near the center of chinatown.

The Home Mission Society helped to support the work in cooperation with the First Baptist Church of San Francisco, however, in 1876 the Society had to withdraw its assistance, and the people in California were forced to carry on the work alone.

The statistical table below records the number of Chinese Sunday Schools reported to be in operation in 1870:

Churches	Teachers	Scholars
First Church, San Francisco	90	150
Tabernacle,        "        "	15	25
First Church, Oakland	30	50
First Church, Brooklyn	10	15
Total	145	240 <sup>4</sup>

There may appear to be an overwhelming number of teachers in comparison with the number of pupils. This is due to the fact that there was

1. California Baptist State Convention Minutes, 1870, p. 7

2. Ibid, 1876, p. 9

3. Ibid, 1881, p. 19

a language difficulty, and it was not adviseable to have more than one or two pupils for each teacher.

As more and more Chinese settled in California the importance of missionary work among them was realized by the religious leaders. The committee on Chinese work made several recommendations urging the churches to establish Sunday schools in their immediate vicinity. The first recommendation regarding Chinese Sunday schools was made in 1870 and was adopted by the State Convention.

Resolved, That we earnestly urge all Baptist Churches to do their utmost to gather into Sunday-Schools the Chinese, whom God in His Providence has thrown in their midst.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of establishing missionary work among the Chinese was again emphasized by the Convention in 1876 and the following resolution was adopted by the delegates:

Resolved, That Baptist Churches are earnestly recommended to engage in the work of Chinese Sunday school instruction, in their respective localities, and prosecute it to the fullest extent of their ability.<sup>2</sup>

Although special effort was being carried on among the Chinese in San Francisco, Oakland and San Diego, it was felt that little was being done for those living in the smaller cities and the Committee on Chinese Missions in 1881 recommended the following resolution:

Resolved, That we urge our churches throughout the State, wherever there are Chinese, to make special local efforts for their instruction and conversion.<sup>3</sup>

Even though the Convention constantly urged the churches to carry on Chinese work in their localities, the only extensive Chinese work reported was in San Francisco. This is due partly to the large number Chinese who settled in San Francisco. John Francis, superintendent of Chinese mission in California in 1874 reported the work in San Francisco and Oakland to be progressing slowly. Excerpts from his

1. California Baptist State Convention Minutes, 1874, p. 9

2. Ibid, p. 9

3. Ibid, 1875, p. 9

report are quoted:

We now have 125 Mission pupils and 12 teachers. We have baptized eight Chinese young men. Dong Gong was the first convert. He returned to China, where he was bitterly persecuted by his heathen father for preaching Jesus to his relatives and others, escaping only with his life to the protection of our Missionaries in Canton. He there pursued his studies for the Gospel ministry two years, through the aid of the First Baptist Church, San Francisco. He has recently returned to labor on this Coast. Lee Key, another convert, is preaching to the pupils on week evenings, and to Sabbath-Schools and in the open-air services each Sabbath. Young Shing, Ah Gin, Ah Lee, Charley Ling and Duck Ball continue in endeavors to bring their countrymen to Christ. Fung Chack, a devoted young brother and earnest preacher, has united with us, bring his letter from the First Baptist Church, Canton, China, making nine communicants who are members of the Baptist churches in San Francisco and Oakland.

The Baptist Chinese Sunday-schools under the care of this Mission number three hundred pupils and seventy-five teachers. Our young Chinese brethren are very useful in visiting the schools and preaching the Gospel to the pupils. We visit, also, the places where the Chinese are employed, and have distributed gratuitously during the past year 5,000 religious tracts, and 100 copies of the New Testament in the Chinese language. We have held 336 public meetings during the year for preaching the Gospel and other wise instructing the Chinese. We have visited and distributed Chinese tracts and copies of the Scriptures in Sacramento, San Jose, Gilroy, Watsonville and Santa Cruz, wherever the Chinese could be gathered into schools to be instructed, and have<sup>1</sup> the Gospel preached to them in their own language.

During this year the Home Mission Society sent another Missionary, Rev. E. Z. Simmons, formerly a missionary in Canton, China. Simmons was the general missionary on the Pacific Coast. In 1875 Simmons reported that he had preached 161 times; the Chinese workers had preached 311 times, mostly in the streets, and he had distributed over 1,000 Baptist tracts. He organized a Chinese Sunday School in Portland, Oregon, and was able to secure the cooperation of the First Baptist Church of that city to sponsor the expenses of the school and those of the missionary, Dong Gong.<sup>3</sup>

1. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1876, p. 7

2. Cathcart, Wm., The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p. 61

3. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1876, p. 7

In 1876 John Francis made a stirring address before the California State Convention concerning the Chinese missions in California in which he stated the following facts:

There are now seven Missions and Sunday-Schools in this State, attended by five hundred Chinamen, and about two hundred Christian brethren and sisters are giving their services in teaching them. The old mission on Washington Street, San Francisco has its doors open night and day, were not less than one hundred Chinese are being taught our language and the religion of Jesus...Since the opening of the Mission, a female department has just been commenced, and about fifty have been converted from idolatry.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of his address, J. C. Baker, general missionary of the American Baptist Publication Society, who had charge of the Pacific Coast Depository which was located at San Francisco,<sup>2</sup> made a motion to adopt the following recommendation regarding Chinese work:

Resolved, That we recognize our obligation to evangelize the Chinese population coming to this coast. That the recent discussion of their political status in no way lessens, but rather increases our obligation to evangelize them, and that we will continue to do all in our power in their direction.<sup>3</sup>

Bitter opposition against the Chinese came to a climax between the years of 1870 and 1880. Chinese started to come to California in 1848 and each year the number increased the immigrants would send word home for their friends to come. Various taxes had been placed on foreign miners or workers in the mines, in the hope that it would prevent the influx of Chinese miners. Apparently this failed for the Chinese continued to come to California and settle in the mining districts, cities and towns, and many were employed by the railroad companies. When the transcontinental railroad was finished in 1869, the vast army of Chinese laborers was discharged and gathered in the cities and particularly in San Francisco. During this period the country was passing through an economic depression, which meant a

1. Gray, History of California, pp. 397-407

2. California Baptist State Convention, 1878, p. 10 (Minutes)

3. General Baptist Convention of California Minutes, 1881, p. 19

low wage scale. There were certain trades which the Chinese monopolized, and the vast unemployment of the workingman was attributed to the large numbers of Chinese who were returning to California from other sections of the country. It was not long before race riots broke out in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chico. Finally, in 1879 Congress passed a bill restricting Chinese immigration.<sup>1</sup>

During the period of bitter opposition toward the Chinese, the Chinese mission in San Francisco suffered greatly. Francis reported that the enrollment for 1878 was almost half of what it had been the year before. The enrollment in the "Roll Call" had been 100 with an average attendance of 75 pupils, but in 1878 it had been reduced to one-half. Francis was exceedingly concerned over the opposition toward the Chinese and in his report to the Convention stated the purpose of his work among the Chinese; parts of it are given as follows:

The work is to impart religious instruction to the Chinese in San Francisco and elsewhere in the State of California... The method adopted is to teach them to read English, so that they may be able to read the word of God in that language, which they love to do, and at the same time give them religious instruction in their own mother tongue.

Meetings for this purpose are held daily in the Mission rooms, four services each week being exclusively devoted to exhortation, singing, prayer and preaching the gospel in the Chinese language. These services are conducted by our young Chinese Brethren of whom there are fifteen, nearly all of them members of the Metropolitan Baptist Church.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the bitter opposition against the Chinese during the seventh decade of the nineteenth century, the First Chinese Baptist of San Francisco was organized on October 3, 1880, under the leadership of Dr. J. B. Hartwell, who had been appointed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society as missionary to the Chinese in California. The following year the membership was twelve and it was a member of the General Baptist Convention of California.<sup>3</sup>

1. General Baptist Convention of California Minutes, 1878, p. 10

2. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1881, p. 19

3. Ibid, 1884, pp. 26-27

When the American Baptist Home Mission Society withdrew its support in 1876, it became necessary for the Chinese mission in San Francisco to be carried on by voluntary contributions from churches, Sunday schools, Mission societies and Associations. In 1878 Francis and the work were supported in part by voluntary contributions from <sup>1</sup> the San Diego Baptist Church.

In 1881 a resolution was submitted to the Convention for adoption, with regard to the support of the mission:

Resolved, That we recommend that our churches aid the Mission at San Francisco in means to pay for assistance in the night school.

and it was further recommended to the Convention that a Chinese Mission Society be organized:

Resolved, That a committee be now appointed and authorized to organize as a constituent of this Convention a Chinese Mission Society with branches in the several churches, whose object shall be to promote, by prayer, direct labor and contributions of money, the cause of the Chinese evangelization in this State. <sup>2</sup>

The foregoing recommendations were unanimously adopted.

In accordance with the recommendations mentioned above, the committee on the organization of a Chinese Mission Society met and drew up plans for a Constitution which was adopted by the General Baptist Convention at its next meeting in 1882. The primary purpose was to raise funds to carry on the work of the Chinese mission. The secondary purpose was to draw in the Branch societies of the Chinese Missionary Society. Although there were a few Chinese leaders both in San Francisco and Oakland, the first <sup>3</sup> officers of the Society were all Americans.

In 1885 the Convention realized that it was difficult to receive help from the Home Mission Society and the Baptist Chinese Missionary Society made recommendations suggesting that the Convention assume the responsibility and the churches assist it in carrying on the Chinese

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1885, pp25-26
2. Ibid, 1891, p. 40

work.

Resolved, That this Convention recognize the wisdom of the Home Mission Society in undertaking the management of missions to the Chinese in America, and in appointing Dr. Hartwell as superintendent of this work.

Resolved, That we pledge to Dr. Hartwell, and through him to the Home Mission Society, our cordial sympathy and co-operation in this department of their work.

Resolved, That we recommend the churches of the State to make missions to the Chinese in America one of the regular objects of benevolence.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually the Chinese work spread out into the state. In 1891 ten Chinese missions were reported to be in operation. A volunteer mission had been established by the First Church of San Jose.<sup>2</sup>

### III. The American Baptist Publication Society

#### 1. Constant Efforts to Establish a Branch

The early pioneer Baptist leaders were quick to realize the importance of literature in the development of the Sunday school. If the lay leaders were to be effective in the advancement of the Christian cause in California, they must have the proper materials with which to work. Throughout America during the latter half of the nineteenth century, religious leaders were emphasizing the importance of good religious literature, and the Baptist leaders in California felt the lack of literature and the opportunity to obtain it readily.

Year after year California Baptist leaders made recommendations for the establishment of a Book Depository on the coast, but it was difficult for the Publication Society in Philadelphia to see the need or gather funds in order to support the work. For many years the churches and Sunday schools of California which had been established early in California.

The need for a Baptist Bookstore in California was brought to the attention of the people at the sixth annual meeting of the San Francisco Baptist Association in 1855. The committee on Publications presented a

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1855, p. 16

2. Ibid. 1856, p. 14

recommendation for the adoption by the Association: "Resolved, That we deem it expedient that a Baptist Publication Society be organized on <sup>1</sup> this Coast."

The Committee on Religious Publications the following year submitted a challenging report to the Association for discussion. They had had correspondence with the American Baptist Publication Society in Philadelphia concerning the possibility of establishing a depository and appointing an agent or colporteur. The society was willing to do what it could, but due to the great expense in establishing the enterprise and the small funds which they had at their disposal were hesitant to embark upon the enterprise. The Society felt that a certain percentage of the expense should be met on the field. As a result two recommendations were submitted to the Association for consideration,

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to inquire further into the practicability of establishing a depository of the American Baptist Publication Society's Books on this coast, and of procuring a depository agent or colporteur.

Resolved, That if the committee thus appointed can devise means by which these objects can be procured, without involving debt or risk during the year, they have <sup>2</sup> discretionary power to consummate the arrangement.

A few years later the Committee on Publications of the State Convention again attempted to interest the people in establishing a bookstore on the coast. It was suggested that a branch office be opened in San Francisco where Baptist literature could be on sale. In order to do this it was necessary to raise \$1,000.00 which would be given to a Board of Managers appointed by the Publication Society <sup>3</sup> and which Board would report annually to the State Convention.

No doubt, the religious leaders would not have constantly urged the establishment of a bookstore, if there had not been a nation-wide movement under way for each denomination to publish and use its

1. Minutes of a Baptist Convention (California) 1860, p. 8

2. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1860, p. 12

own literature. In 1860 a recommendation was made to the Convention to do away with the interdenominational material, that could not be used effectively in teaching the specific doctrines of the Baptist denomination.

Resolved, That a purely Baptist literature is an essential aid to the gospel ministry, and of vast importance to the enlightenment and efficiency of the Churches of Christ.

Resolved, That we recognize, with gratitude, the honor which God has put upon a sanctified press, and that we feel the responsibility resting upon us to supply this powerful instrumentality to the greatest possible extent.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Publication Society did not establish a Branch on the Pacific Coast during the early pioneer days, it did have some influence on the field through the work of a colporter, Rev. Orrin Crittendon. Colporter work in the middle west was very successful as a result of the consecrated life of John Mason Peck. Peck was able to reach a group of people who were unreached by the ministers in cities and towns. For a few years the Society supported a colporter on the Pacific Coast.

Crittendon was the first colporter in California. He came to California some time in 1854. Unfortunately the date of his appointment under the Publication Society is not given. However, in 1860 he was represented as the Missionary of the American Baptist Publication Society, but the nature of his work was that of a colporter. In the report of the Committee on Religious Publications of the San Francisco Association, Crittendon is referred to as having already entered upon the important work of colporter.<sup>2</sup> Special recognition for Crittendon and his work is again referred to in the San Francisco Association in 1862. Two years later for some reason Crittendon gave up his work as colporter and was living in Mountain View, where he

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1865, p. 12

2. Ibid, 1869, p. 19

A year after Crittendon gave up his work for the Publication Society, the subject of a Book Depository was again placed before the San Francisco Association. J. H. Giles in his report to the Association presents a discouraging picture with regard to the interest of the Publication Society in establishing a bookstore on the Coast. He felt that it was impossible to expect any help from the Society and in view of this he made the recommendation "That the churches of this Association are earnestly recommended to establish, vigorously support and prayerfully circulate denominational libraries."<sup>1</sup> In this manner it was possible for the books to circulate from one place to another and allow the people to read the various books as they were secured from the eastern coast.

Four years after Giles recommendation plans for action with regard to the establishment of a Baptist Depository were submitted to the San Francisco Association by C. A. Buckbee, whose recommendation of such a plan was adopted by the Association and a committee was appointed.

Resolved, That a Committee be now appointed, whose duty it shall be to correspond with friends on this Coast and at the East, to obtain all facts and information needed, in order that they may be able to prepare and report at our next annual meeting, some definite plan for the establishment of a suitable Baptist Publication Depository.<sup>2</sup>

The committee did not report the following year, but in 1871 it submitted its report to the Association for discussion. The committee discovered that \$10,000.00 would be needed to stock a depository, and they had had correspondence with friends and business men in the east who felt that the Baptist cause on the Pacific Coast was too small numerically to justify such an enterprise. The Baptists were not the only ones who were facing the difficulty - other denominations on the Coast were attempting to solve the problem. Finally a suggestion was made that the people obtain books and other publications direct from the publishers and from friends on the eastern coast. It was further

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1871, p. 17

2. Ibid, 1873, p. 13

3. Ibid, 1875, p. 8

4. Baptist State Convention of California, Minutes, 1875, p.4 see also  
San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1875, p. 10

5. Cathcart, William, The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p.61

recommended that each church establish a depository of its own for  
 1  
 Baptist books and tracts.

Two years after the report of the committee concerning plans for establishing a depository, Rev. H. Taylor made a motion that a preamble and recommendation concerning the need of a Baptist Book Depository be considered and passed by the Association. Accordingly the Association passed the following recommendations:

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the literature of the Publication Society at Philadelphia should be circulated in this State and on this Coast, therefore,

RESOLVED, that the Association appoint, through its moderator, a committee of three to take the matter into consideration, and, if possible, establish on some basis a Branch House in San Francisco, and that such committee report the progress made at the next associational meeting.

This time the recommendation of the Committee on Religious Publications brought results. Two years later a book depository was opened in San Francisco, and a Sunday-school missionary was appointed. So grateful was the Association to the Publication Society for this action that a resolution was passed expressing the appreciation of the group:

Resolved, That we are glad and thankful to God that the American Baptist Publication Society has sent to us a Sunday-school missionary and opened a depository of its books at San Francisco. We believe this to be a needed agency in California, coming to us at an auspicious time we pledge to it our co-operation and support.

After twenty years of persistent effort the Baptists of California were able to have their needs supplied in the establishment of a Baptist Book Store. The Pacific Coast Depository of the American Baptist Publication Society was put under the leadership of Rev. J. C. Baker, who at the same time, was appointed Sunday School Missionary of the Publication Society.<sup>4</sup> Baker travelled extensively throughout California and the Oregon and Washington Territory. One of his duties and interests was  
 5  
 in the Sunday-school, and wherever, he went he attempted to establish a

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1876, p. 18

2. Ibid, 1877, p. 11

3. Cathcart, Wm. The Baptist Encyclopaedia, p. 61

Sunday school if the need were imperative.

The joy of having a book depository on the Pacific Coast was short lived. The people lost their enthusiasm when they learned that they were expected to sponsor the entire support of the work, both in the expense of maintaining a store and the work of the Sunday school missionary. For some reason the Publication Society felt that it was necessary to withdraw its support and the leaders in California felt that this act would hinder the cause of the Publication Society on the Coast. The committee on Religious Publications knew that the churches were unable to support the work due to the heavy debts which were the result of excessive building. The committee did state that they were willing to contribute to the work of the Publication Society's representative <sup>1</sup> if he remained among them.

It is difficult to determine what happened to the Publication Society's depository and missionary, but apparently the Society went ahead and withdrew its support for in the report of the committee on Religious Publications in 1877, the Committee was looking for a place in which the publications of the Publication Society would be kept <sup>2</sup> on hand for sale, and which publications were at that time stored somewhere in the Bay area. Baker, in the meantime, went to <sup>3</sup> Oregon, to take the pastorate of the Salem church.

## 2. Permanent Establishment of the Book Depository

So far it should be noted that the majority of the requests for the establishment of a Branch office of the Publication Society came from the San Francisco Baptist Association and not from the State Convention. The interest in the Publication Society centered in the Bay area, where the greatest amount of work was carried on. Further, San Francisco and this area were the center of commercial activity. After a number of years of silence on the matter of a Branch store, the General Baptist

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1881, p. 16

2. Ibid. 1882, p. 31

3. Ibid. pp.8-9

Convention expressed a desire that the Publication Society should try to establish a book depository in the Bay area.

Resolved, That this Convention expresses an earnest desire that the American Baptist Publication Society shall establish a book depository in San Francisco or some other eligible point in the State.

The following year the Publication Society responded to this request, and a book depository was permanently established in California. Rev. G. S. Abbott, D.D. was put in charge of the store and at the same time undertook the duties of the Sunday School Missionary in the State <sup>2</sup> for the Publication Society. There was a great deal of joy expressed over this action of the Society, and it was voted to express to the Publication Society the gratitude of the people in California. The churches in the Central Baptist Association were earnestly urged to patronize the Society and use the materials which it published for the Sunday school. In order to off-set some of the expense in establishing the depository, it was suggested that the churches help to support the work through contributions.

Resolved, That as churches we will each and all take up an annual collection for the benefit of the Publication Society, in addition to the patronage of the Society in our own behalf; and that, as pastors, we will not only preach upon the claims of the Publication Society, but we will, so far as in us lies, do all we can to co-operate with our Secretary, and thus <sup>3</sup> accomplish the purpose of the parent organization.

The Publication Society through the influence of its agent, G. S. Abbott, played an important part in the life of the Sunday schools for the next decade and a half. Abbott spent a great deal of his time assisting the Sunday schools, helping them to improve their organizations, teaching them new methods in Sunday school work and stimulating interest among the people in the community for the Sunday school movement. Abbott organized Sunday schools in localities where there was a need, and when a new Sunday school was organized, a set of quarterlies

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1890, pp.39-40

2. Pacific Banner, Souvenir Copy, May 24, 1899, p. 9

3. Unable to locate reference

for one quarter were sent free with the pledge from the Sunday school that it would renew the order and continue to order materials from the Society. Abbott tried to visit each Association and to stimulate the churches in improving their Sunday schools. It was through the influence and leadership of Abbott that the Sunday School Institutes for teachers, superintendents and Sunday school workers were established in California. (Discussion of the Institutes is in the next chapter.)

It was, also, through the efforts of Abbott that the Sunday School movement developed and grew in the Baptist Churches of California. He made a great contribution to the Baptist cause in California, and some one has said of him that the "aim of his life was to bring forth results, and whatever he touched in the way of work was left in a better condition than he found it."<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. History of the Sunday School Conventions in California

##### 1. Early Attempts to Organize a Sunday School Convention

The value of Sunday School Conventions was early realized in the Sunday School movement in California. Sunday School Conventions were held in the Eastern States with a great deal of success. The Baptist leaders who came to California and helped develop the Baptist work, brought with them ideas concerning Sunday School work and organization which they had seen in operation in their home states. Hence, the first Sunday School Convention, held under Baptist auspices in California, convened on May 14, 1857 in the Metropolitan Temple in San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> The year before a resolution had been presented before the San Francisco Association by J. Lewis Roberts urging cooperation in calling a Sunday School Convention:

Resolved, That we heartily approve of the call for a Sabbath School Convention, to be held in San Francisco

1. San Francisco Baptist Association Minutes, 1856, p. 7

2. Ibid. 1867, p. 18

3. Ibid. 1868, p. 10

4. Ibid. 1871, p. 17

on Thursday, 12th June, and pray that the meeting may result in a great good to the Schools represented, and to the cause throughout this State and Oregon."<sup>1</sup>

Why there is no record of another meeting is difficult to determine. One reason may have been the unsettled condition of the churches at this time and another the long distances from one city to another and the difficulty of travel. When the San Francisco Association met in 1867 a motion was made by Rev. J. C. Hall to the effect that a Pacific Baptist Sunday School Union be formed:

Resolved, That the time has arrived when it becomes not only a necessity, but a duty, for the Baptists on this coast to form a Pacific Baptist Sunday School Union.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report upon the subject at the next meeting of this Association.<sup>2</sup>

However, due to unforeseen events the committee did not report the following year and no definite plans for action were made, but it was recommended that the subject be presented at the next annual meeting of the Association.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Later Attempts to Hold Sunday School Conventions

Although it was difficult for Baptist leaders to organize and hold a Baptist Sunday School Convention there was an Union Sunday School Convention which was "held annually in this state." The leaders felt that if a Union Sunday School Convention could be held with some success it was possible to hold a Baptist Sunday School Convention with equal success, and accordingly in 1871, the leaders recommended to the San Francisco Association the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved; 1st. That this Association, at its present session, appoint fifteen brethren, who shall constitute an Executive Committee, and five of whom shall constitute a quorum, empowered by this body to arrange a time and place, and give notice thereof through the Evangel, for the calling and permanent organization of such Baptist State Sunday School Convention. for this Association to meet before the month of June, 1872.<sup>4</sup>

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1871, p. 17

2. Ibid, 1873, p. 12

3. California Baptist State Convention, 1875, p. 6 (Minutes)

At the next Association meeting, the committee reported an "Associational Sunday School Convention" had convened in June, and the Association was recommended to read the report of the Sunday School Convention. <sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to locate a copy of the minutes of the Sunday School Convention.

The leaders of the San Francisco Association felt that the matter of a Sunday School Convention was of such importance as to warrant consideration by the State Convention, and in 1873 the Committee on Sunday School submitted the following recommendation which was adopted after some discussion:

Resolved, That the state of the denomination on this Coast indicates that the time is come when Baptist Sunday School interests should be considered in a State Sunday School Convention, and that at the next Baptist State Convention our Brethren of sister associations are invited to co-operate with any members of this association in the organization of such Baptist State Sunday School Convention.

However, when the Convention met, other matters of seemingly more importance were considered, and no effort was made to carry out the recommendation of the San Francisco Association until the following year. During the meeting of the State Convention in 1875 an effort was made to organize a Sunday School Convention. Accordingly on Saturday afternoon, May 29, 1875, the Baptist State Convention of California met and authorized the organization of a Sunday School Convention, which was to be under the direction of Rev. J. C. Baker, who at that time was the Sunday School <sup>3</sup> Missionary of the Pacific Coast.

A later the State Convention was in the process of being re-organized and when the new constitution of the California Baptist State Convention was adopted in 1876, provision was made for a Sunday School Board of nine members. Provision for the Sunday School Board was made in Article V of the new constitution:

1. California Baptist State Convention, Minutes, 1876, p. 6

2. General Baptist Convention and Central Baptist Association of California, 1881, Minutes, p. 12

3. Ibid, p. 13

...This Board shall co-operate with the American Baptist Publication Society in advancing Sunday-school work in the State. It shall elect its own officers, adopt such rules as may be necessary, fill vacancies occurring in its own number, and report to the convention its own doings, together with general statistics of our Sunday-school work in the State. At the annual meeting of the convention, two sessions may be occupied for State Sunday-school interests, in such manner as may be provided for by this Board.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently a Baptist Sunday School Convention idea did not get further consideration for after 1876 it is hardly mentioned. A recommendation was passed in this year to the effect that the churches co-operate with the California State Sabbath School Convention which was an interdenominational enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The Sunday School committee of 1881 recommended the Sunday schools to send delegates to the Sunday School State Convention.<sup>3</sup> After 1881 few references, if any, are made to the Sunday School Convention, and it appears to have disappeared from the minds of the Baptist leaders. One of the reasons for the lack of interest in the Sunday School Convention may be in part due to the Sunday School Institutes, which in a way took the place of the Conventions. The Institutes were to be desired, as it was possible to hold them in smaller localities thus enabling more people to attend. However, the efforts of the early pioneers to establish Sunday School Conventions must be thought in terms of their ability to see a need and find means of meeting that need.



## CHAPTER THREE

### CURRICULUM AND METHODS IN THE EARLY BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1856, p. 7

2. Ibid, p. 7

## CHAPTER THREE

## CURRICULUM AND METHODS IN THE EARLY BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS

The Sunday school work was necessary both in scope and program. However, as time passed more attention was given to the various phases of the program. Here in California the pioneers brought with them ideas which they had held in their home states and which were representative of the general thinking regarding matters of politics, economics and religion. The Baptist leaders brought with them the ideas of church organization that they had seen in practice in the Eastern states. It is natural that in establishing the Sunday schools in California they should copy the methods used in the Eastern churches.

#### I. Objectives of the Sunday School

##### 1. Evangelization

The Sunday school was established in America during the latter half of the eighteenth century. At the time Baptist work was begun in California, the Sunday school was considered an important part of the total work of the church by religious leaders. It was considered the best agency for the evangelization of children. The religious leaders of early California Baptist history held this view, "We believe the Sabbath School enterprise to be one of the most powerful and efficient means under God, for the evangelization of the world."<sup>1</sup> At the sixth annual meeting of the San Francisco Association, several resolutions were adopted and one of them expressed the general thought concerning the Sunday school:

Resolved, That we believe the Sabbath School is an institution peculiarly adapted to accomplish this work (religious education), and therefore, should receive the hearty support of every true follower of Christ.

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1860, p. 10

2. Brown, A History of Religious Education in Recent Times, p. 63

The committee on Sunday schools in 1860 again stressed the evangelistic importance of the Sunday school. They considered the Sunday school "as an instrumentality for the advancement of truth and the saving of souls." By this time the Sunday school was proving its usefulness to the church in the matter of training future religious leaders and missionaries. The thought had been developed in which the teachers were encouraged and urged to continue teaching for they could never know what impression was made on the child's <sup>1</sup> mind.

## 2. Two Objectives of the Sunday School

Christian Education of the twentieth century has accepted seven objectives, but the Christian Education of ninety years ago had two objectives: one, to convert each individual of the school to God and second, to bring him into a knowledge of the subject matter of the Bible. The most important thing considered at this period was "that if the individual 'once got right with God,' divine guidance would protect and inspire him through the journey of life without much assistance from <sup>2</sup> teachers." The emphasis was laid not on how to grow into the Christian life or how to develop a Christian personality but on the experience of having a great emotional upheaval in the process of being converted to God. Once an individual had been converted to God the work of a leader was ended, and the new Christian soul would naturally and easily find its way into a deep and rich fellowship with God without too much effort.

## II. Curriculum and Methods of the Sunday School

### 1. Place of the Catechism in the Sunday School Program

The movement in America toward a better curriculum and method in teaching began soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century; soon question books and catechetical books were widely used. The primary purpose of the

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1866, p. 16

2. Pacific Baptist Association, Minutes, 1866, p. 11

3. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1867, p. 16

question books and catechisms was to teach the doctrine of the church. Each denomination had developed its own particular question books; although a Union Question Book had been published by the American Bible Union and was somewhat extensively used. The Baptists developed their catechetical book, and the early California Baptist leaders frequently made recommendations to use it as a help in teaching the Sunday school lessons. The Committee on Religious Publications in 1868 recommended to the San Francisco Baptist Association the "Baptist Catechism," published by the American Baptist Publication Society, and sold on this coast at the office of 'The Evangel' and for adoption by the Sabbath Schools in the churches of this body.<sup>1</sup> That same year the Pacific Baptist Association adopted a similar recommendation, regarding the use of the catechism:

Resolved, That this Association recommend for examination, with a view to introduction into our Sabbath Schools, 'The Catechism,' recently published by the American Baptist Publication Society.

## 2. Use of the Bible

Extensive use of the catechism was going out of vogue at the time of the establishment of Baptist work in California and more emphasis was laid on the importance of the use of the Bible in the Sunday school. The leaders in religious education believed that there was a need for direct study of the Bible. This was true of the Baptist leaders in California for we find constant reference to the importance of Bible teaching.

The Sunday School committee of the San Francisco Association in its annual report for 1867 felt that the Sunday school should not only seek the conversion of the soul, as its first and highest aim, but it should seek the education of the soul in righteousness, which could be done through teaching the Bible.<sup>3</sup> One of the ways in which to convert a

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1880, p. 23

2. Ibid, 1881, p. 13

3. Ibid, 1883, p. 20

soul was through the Bible, and the religious leaders in the middle nineteenth century put a great deal of stress on the teaching of the Bible, especially to children. Baptists have always held to this thought, and the early California Baptist leaders were constantly stressing its importance in their reports to the Conventions or Associations. Several times the phase "the Bible is peculiarly a book of the Baptist" appears in the various reports.

These early Baptist leaders laid much emphasis upon the teaching of the Bible in the Sunday school. When the Sunday schools in California were established, the emphasis was upon a Bible centered curriculum. Apparently thirty years later the Sunday schools were not using a Bible centered curriculum for the Sunday school committee in 1881 recommended that a "more general and more practical use of the Bible" be made.

Two years later the Sunday School committee made a long report to the State Convention. The report is quite expressive of the prevailing thought at this time. The report not only laid emphasis upon the importance of the Sunday school work, but upon the Bible as an essential factor in the Sunday school teaching:

Your committee on Sunday schools would urge upon the members of our churches the importance of Sunday school work and the value of Bible study. The teaching of God's revealed law was especially enjoined upon the Israelites. It was to be taught diligently unto the children; it was to be the subject of conversation in the house and by the way, at the close of day and in the early morning...The Bible also reveals laws which apply to man's temporal condition and to his relations with his fellowmen; and these are consequently fitted to secure his highest welfare and the best conditions to society...In a word, the Bible is the text book of life, the one only true and comprehensive text book, with lessons adapted to all conditions of men and to all phases of society. Its lessons should be taught, therefore, to every man, woman and child, and the earlier in life the better.

The committee continued its report by laying emphasis upon the value

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1883, p. 20

2. Ibid, 1884, p. 20

3. Betts, Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 93

of the Sunday school work:

The Sunday school magnifies the Bible as the Word of God, and exalts it as the only authority in doctrine and life. It turns the light of the Bible upon the heart, that its nature and its need of purification may be made plain, and teaches the necessity of purity of inward life as well as outward conformity to God's laws...The Sunday school commences this work at the most susceptible period of life, and from that point carries forward the educational which is intended, under Divine influence, to build up character after the Bible standard.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was the Bible an important book in the teaching of young children, but the New Testament was considered a special book for children:

The New Testament is pre-eminently a child's book. It is the only volume coming down to us from ancient literature that is especially interested in children, and the only one that children are particularly interested in. They love it <sup>2</sup> because it is so full of Christ, and of love for them...

The Bible never lost its primary importance in Baptist Sunday schools, and it is difficult to find a time when the Bible was not considered the basic material for the curriculum. Indeed, this is true generally. Betts states: "There has been no period in the history of the American Sunday Schools, at least since they were taken over by the church, when the Bible did not have a place. The question is one of emphasis and not of complete exclusion or inclusion."<sup>3</sup>

The most extensive method used in teaching the Bible was the memorization of the scriptures. Memorization of the scriptures was considered to have great value both the teacher and to the pupil. To the teacher it enabled him to measure the development and growth of the child by the number of verses which he could recite, and to the child it was supposed to work like magic in converting him to the Christian faith. A. A. Brown has expressed it as follows: it was the prevailing thought and "conviction that Bible verses in the minds of young scholars were expected to work like magic by bringing about conversion whether the

1. Brown, History of Religious Education in Recent Times, p. 65

2. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, p. 12

3. The Evangel, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1/14/69

4. The Evangel, Vol. IV, No. 8, 4/18/61, p.3, Col. 2

pupil understood their meaning or not." It was held that "many Bible stories and verses are so simple that they will carry their own message, and the mere memorization of these by pupils whose teachers are incompetent will accomplish good."<sup>1</sup> Memorization was made an end in itself instead of a means to an end.

Memorization of the scriptures was given a great deal of consideration by the Baptist leaders in California. Frequently references were made to the importance of this phase of Sunday school teaching, and concern was expressed when it was neglected. In 1862 the Sunday school committee made the following recommendation:

Resolved, 3rd, That we regard with painful solicitude the growing tendency to dispense with the recitation of committed portions of Scripture as a regular exercise in our Sabbath Schools.<sup>2</sup>

California religious leaders felt that memorization was necessary in the life of the child; and they believed that it should be begun before the child entered the Sunday school. However, they did consider it the duty of the teachers "to follow up or substitute the parent in storing the memory of the child with passages of Scripture...The habit of committing a part of the recitation everyday, should be urged as the last importance."<sup>3</sup>

The teacher was expected to have the passage of scripture, which was taught to the pupil, committed to memory. The leaders felt that "in committing scripture to memory, teachers set a worthy example to their scholars, and example is one of the best and surest ways of inducing scholars to their lesson."<sup>4</sup>

The memorization of scriptures as a primary part of teaching was held as late as 1889 when the committee on Sunday schools in its report before the State Convention presented the following resolution: "Resolved, That there should be a revival of biblical study and memorizing of the

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1889, p. 21

2. Betts, Curriculum of Religious Education, pp. 115-119

3. Ibid, p. 124

<sup>1</sup> scriptures." This action was in a way a counteraction against the extensive use of the catechisms or lessons helps and laid emphasis upon the direct study of the Bible, which many people felt was imperative to good Sunday School teaching.

### 3. The Development of Lesson Helps

Although the Baptist leaders in California were constantly laying a great deal of emphasis upon the Bible, they did give some consideration to the various "lesson helps" published by the publication Society. The first lessons published in America were those published by the American Bible Society in 1832. It was not long after the appearance of the American Bible Society's lessons, that each denominational publishing house began to develop their own lesson plans. The movement toward the publishing of denominational curriculum found the publishing boards ill-prepared to take the full responsibility of presenting material to their churches. There were two reasons for the unpreparedness; one, they lacked the organization and equipment necessary to insure uniformity of curriculum, and two, they did not have any organized courses prepared for the churches. The result was a period of confusion and chaos, which is usually referred to as the "Babel period" and which lasted from 1840 to <sup>2</sup> 1870. It is during this period that the Baptist work on the Pacific Coast was striving to establish itself, and it is one of the reasons why the Sunday school work was slow in progressing. If the East had been definite in the type of curriculum it was striving to develop, the West might have progressed more rapidly.

The development of Uniform Sunday School lessons was the result of the work of John H. Vincent, a Methodist minister, and B. F. Jacobs, a Baptist layman. They were influential in organizing a committee whose duty it was to "select a course of Bible lessons for a series of years not exceeding seven..." <sup>3</sup> This is the beginning of the International

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1883, pp. 27-30
2. The Evangel, Vol. V, No. 3, 2/1/64
  
3. The Herald of Truth, Vol. V, No. 3, 1/1/84

Lesson Committee as well as the International Uniform Lessons, and the end of the "Babel period."

Each denomination toward the end of the "Babel period" began to publish its own lesson helps. In 1883 Baptists in California were urged to recommend to use the lesson helps which were carefully prepared for all grades by the Publication Society.<sup>1</sup> Later the helps were advertized as graded lesson helps,<sup>2</sup> and the teachers were recommended to use them.

During the year of 1884 the Herald of Truth published in San Francisco advertized the periodicals which were urged upon Baptist Sunday school workers in California:

1. "Baptist Teacher, monthly journal for Sunday School workers with hints and helps for teachers.
2. "Baptist Superintendent" (new), a quarterly journal designed exclusively for superintendents.
3. "Our Young People", A Sunday School paper for older scholars.
4. "The Young Reaper", published monthly and semi-quarterly, finely illustrated.
5. "The Sunlight", published monthly and semi-monthly.
6. "Our Little Ones", It is a gem of a paper for very little people.
7. "The Home Circle", Family magazine.

Quarterlies:

1. "Picture lesson cards (primary)
2. "Primary quarterly"
3. "Intermediate quarterly"
4. "Advanced quarterly"
5. "Bible Lesson monthly"
6. "Senior Quarterly (new) Adult classes."

3

Before the appointment of G. S. Abbott by the Publication Society in 1882, there were very few references to the "lesson helps." One reason is that the lessons had not been developed and another that the Publication Society did not have a representative on the Coast who was vitally interested

1. Reference cannot be located

2. Pacific Baptist Association, Minutes, 1884, p. 3

3. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1881, p. 13

4. Ibid, 1886, p. 16

5. Ibid, 1888, p. 18

6. Central Baptist Association, Minutes, 1888, p. 23

in this phase of Christian service. Abbott was not only interested in the Sunday school, but edited and wrote lesson plans which were published in <sup>1</sup> The Evangel. In 1884 the Committee on Sunday Schools of the Pacific Baptist Association "urged the constant use of the excellent, well graded 'Baptist Lesson Helps' and libraries."<sup>2</sup> Three years before the Sunday school committee of the State Convention recommended that the churches use <sup>3</sup> the denominational literature in all of their Sunday school work. The churches of the General Baptist Convention of California were urged to use <sup>4</sup> the small lesson papers and helps published by the Society.

The literature of the Publication Society was considered very valuable in teaching the Sunday school pupils. The committee on Sunday schools in 1888 felt that the lesson helps were "invaluable aids in the study of the Bible lessons."<sup>5</sup> The committee declared that the lessons gave "a comprehensive commentary upon the text, and are prepared for both the older and younger scholars, evidently with conscientious care, by men of great ability and devoutness of spirit. These lesson helps are not excelled by any other similar publications."<sup>6</sup> Not only were the lesson helps valuable in teaching the Bible, but they were indoctrinated throughout with Baptist beliefs, and the committee in a report declared: "It cannot be urged too strongly that all of our Sabbath Schools use the supplies furnished by our <sup>6</sup> Publication Society - they are scholarly, evangelical and Baptistic."

#### 4. Development of Contests

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the place of the Sunday school had gained more prominence in the thinking of Christian people and in the life of the church in America. In California it was beginning to receive more attention and consideration both by the religious leaders and by the laity. More thought was given to the Sunday School reports during the association and convention meetings. It is

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1878, p. 11

2. General Baptist Convention of California, 1888, p. 16

3. Ibid, p. 16

difficult to say when the "contest" idea developed in the history of the Sunday school movement in California, but in 1878 the committee on Sunday schools recommended that an Associational Banner be secured:

We further recommend the securing of an Association Banner, to be awarded annually to the Sunday-school that shall show the best attendance, the largest number of verses of the Bible committed, the largest number gathered into the school, and the greatest amount of money raised for missionary and other needful purposes, the award to be made in proportion to the number of members belonging to the school.<sup>1</sup>

After 1880 there is no further mention of the Association Banner, but it is assumed that it continued to be awarded to the church with the highest record.

### 5. Special Days in the Sunday School

As the Sunday school had a definite part in the life of the people and the people developed a deeper appreciation of its work, special days were inaugurated by the leaders and by the Publication Society. Perhaps, no man did more for the development of the Sunday school movement in California than G. S. Abbott. It is chiefly through him that the recognition of special days was developed. The purpose of the special days was to secure contributions for the Publication Society in its various branches of service to the Sunday school. "Children's Day" and "Bible Day" had been in progress quite some time before any mention is made of them in the record of the Sunday school committee either of the Baptist Associations or the State Conventions of California. The first mention of the special days is in the report of the Sunday school committee to the General Baptist Convention of California in 1888.<sup>2</sup>

"Children's Day" was usually held in June and "Bible Day" in November.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that in 1889 two more special days were added to the program of the Sunday school which appeared to give evidence of a "missionary spirit that was deepening." They were "Chapel Building

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1889, p.21

2. Central Baptist Association, 1890, p. 14

Day" and "California Day -- Harvest Home". From the comment made by the Sunday school committee to the State Convention, it is understood that the contributions received on these days went toward the building of mission schools which were built in places where there was a pertinent need. Another special day which was a later development was concerned with the conversion of children. The committee on Sunday schools for the Central Baptist Association in 1890 recommended to the Association the following "That the first Sunday of the New Year be observed as a day of special <sup>2</sup> prayer for the conversion of children."

## 6. The Sunday School Libraries

It is difficult for us to realize that there was a time in California when there were no public libraries or libraries of any sort, but when the early pioneers settled in California the only books available were those which they had brought with them from the Atlantic coast. Books in the early days of settlement were expensive and heavy to handle and consequently they were the things left behind. The Christian people who came brought with them one book - the Bible.

The pioneer religious leaders were aware of the dearth of good literature available for the people. Time and time again emphasis was laid upon the responsibility of the church in the establishment of libraries. The religious leaders of America in general realized the value of libraries, and the importance of a good library was stressed among the churches in the East. Naturally, the leaders coming into a primitive situation felt the need more keenly and constantly urged the Sunday schools to develop their libraries and keep the libraries up-to-date. They, also, felt that a Sunday school could not be effective without the use of a library. It was believed that if the child had a copy of the Sunday school lesson, had read a Sunday school library book and a Sunday school paper there was no

1. Report of the American Sunday School Union of 1847, pp. 3-63

2. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1860, p. 10

3. Ibid, p. 12

4. Ibid, 1867, p. 17

need to worry about the direction of his soul. On the average a new Sunday school library contained one hundred volumes. In 1847 the American Sunday School Union reported a "Ten Dollar Library" which contained one hundred volumes of books for the various age groups of the Sunday school.<sup>1</sup>

In a report given by the Sunday school committee to the San Francisco Association in 1860, the committee mentioned the fact that a member of the committee was attempting to help the establishment of the Sunday schools by "furnishing libraries from our Atlantic publishing houses."<sup>2</sup> During the same Association meeting the Committee on Religious Publications urged upon the people the importance of books, and the necessity of the church in establishing circulating libraries:

We are living in the midst of a population of a wonderful activity of mind, and unusual cultivation. Our people are a reading people. Books are in great demand. It is our duty and privilege to meet this demand, and direct the currents of thought into channels of truth and religion.

To do this efficiently, we would urge upon churches to establish small circulating libraries of standard works. The cost is but small, and the result will be a wonderful development of the religious power of the churches themselves, and a vast increase of correct views among those who are not of us.

Ten years after the establishment of the "Evangel" in 1857, it was possible for the Sunday schools to purchase books and libraries at the office of the "The Evangel" in Oakland.<sup>4</sup> In 1882 the Baptist book depository had been established on the Pacific Coast so that Baptist literature was made available to the churches, and the committee on Sunday school in that same year urged the churches to carefully check their books and to use materials which were available in the book depository. Excerpts from that report are quoted:

We therefore recommend and suggest that through our Sunday Schools we make every possible endeavor to diffuse and circulate our denominational literature

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1882, p. 18
2. Central Baptist Association, Minutes, 1885, p. 18
3. Ibid, 1886, p. 16
4. Ibid, 1887, p. 18
5. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1890, p. 38

that having now a depository on this Coast, we have facilities for doing this such as we have not had before, we recommend that this branch of denominational work be liberally patronized, that our Sunday School libraries may no longer be stocked with mongrel literature, that our scholars may in their Sunday school training become indoctrinated in Baptist truth. A Baptist Sunday School without Baptist literature and Baptist teachers had best change its tactics or its name at once...

It was felt that the Sunday school library was so important to the life of the Sunday school that it merited the appointment of a committee whose duty it would be to read and recommend certain books for the library:

The appointment of a judicious Library Committee, who shall be authorized to add new books to the library as often as highly valuable books shall, from time to time, be published, insisting that some member of the committee shall first acquaint himself with the sentiment of every page of the book to be introduced.

The following year the Sunday School was urged to "provide itself with a first class library.<sup>3</sup> Again in 1887 the Sunday school committee of the Central Baptist Association stressed the importance of books in the work of the Sunday school. The schools were urged to "be abundantly supplied with Bibles, hymn books, libraries and the literature of the American Baptist Publication Society..."<sup>4</sup>

At the General Baptist Convention of 1890 the Sunday school committee presented an encouraging report with regard to the use of literature and libraries: "It is an encouraging fact that there has been a greater call for libraries." Apparently this was not universally true in all of California for we find the following resolution:

Third, that the call for libraries should be more general; and that carefully selected libraries should be at the command of all Baptist Sunday-<sup>5</sup> schools.

Throughout the development of religious education in America, emphasis has been constantly placed upon the value of good literature in the development

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1891, pp. 25-27

2. Ibid, 1892, pp. 25-

3. The Evangel, Vol. III, No. 18, 12/21/60, p. 2, Col. 5

of the Christian life. This was particularly true in the late nineteenth century, when there was so much emphasis put upon a certain type of "good" book for children. The Sunday school committee of the General Baptist Convention in 1891 felt that the books sent out by the Publication Society were safe to be put into the hands of the children, as each book was "carefully examined before being sent out."<sup>1</sup> The committee declared that "in the selection of Libraries for our Sunday schools, the greatest possible care should be observed. The light, cheap and trashy stuff often designated as Sunday school literature, is to the mind of the child, harmful in many respects; and as it is the prime object of our Publication Society to provide and furnish the Sunday schools with such literature as will produce within the child an aspiration for true and noble Christian character we therefore deem it expedient at this time, to urge upon our Sunday schools the advisability of always giving our Publication Society <sup>2</sup> the preference". Throughout the development of Baptist effort in California, stress was laid on the importance of Baptist literature for Baptist Sunday schools. It was one way in which Baptist influence could be strengthened.

### III. Organization of the Sunday School

#### 1. Officers

The organization of the Sunday school was quite simple as it only required the following officers: the superintendent, secretary and librarian.

The superintendent was the most important officer of the Sunday school and his requirements were more exacting. First, he must be a good Christian man of irreproachable character and popular with children. <sup>3</sup> Second, he must have administrative ability.

The position of superintendency of the Sunday school was considered a very important one, and was held in high esteem by the Baptist leaders in California. The Editor of the Banner in 1852 wrote an article concerning

1. Pacific Banner, Vol. I, No. 1, 7/10/52

2. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1885, p. 18

3. The Evangel, Vol. III, No. 18, 12/20/60

4. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1883, p. 29

5. The Evangel, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1/14/69

the responsibility of the superintendent:

There are few positions of greater usefulness to pious laymen, than that of superintendents of the Sabbath-school. A man who has the tact and talent of governing children, and interesting their minds in the great truths of religion, may in such a station make impressions more lasting than life itself. He has minds before him which are ready to receive seed that is to come to maturity only in eternity. He should prepare himself to fulfill the duties of the office with but little less care than is exercised by the minister of the gospel... If I am correct in my notion of their duties all that is required, and all that is profitable is, to sing a short hymn, make a short prayer--chiefly employing the blessing of God upon the Sabbath-school scholars and teachers, and entreating that the instruction imparted might be applied by the Spirit of God to the hearts of the children, and that the dear Redeemer would make them his children--and then to read a short passage in God's word, occasionally making a passing remark or observation. But instead of this it is not unfrequent, indeed, it is habitual, with some most excellent and zealous superintendents, to sing four or five verses of a hymn, make a prayer longer than the minister makes in the morning of the Sabbath, read a long passage in the Scriptures, and expound and apply it.

## 2. Sunday School Teachers

The most important duty of the superintendent was in choosing teachers. The "superintendent must be very careful to select such teachers as will win their unconverted pupils to Christ and teach the way of salvation in purity and simplicity."<sup>2</sup> One of the best ways a superintendent had to enlist teachers was through the normal or recruiting Bible class. The purpose of this class was to train teachers in the methods of teaching the Bible to the pupils and to have a supply of potential teachers. The teachers chosen for Sunday School teaching "must be of good moral character, and as it is their business to teach religion, they should be devotedly pious."<sup>3</sup> The teacher was declared to be one who was a disciple of Christ and who was willing to render complete service--not half-hearted and variable, and he was the best ally of the Christian parent, or the best substitute for the irreligious.<sup>4</sup><sup>5</sup>

The Sunday school teacher was expected to have certain aims and in

1. The Evangel, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1/14/69

2. The Evangel, Vol. XIII, No. 45, 11/10/70

3. The Evangel, Vol. XII, No. 7, 2/18/69

The Evangel of 1869 these were expressed:

Our object is to win the soul to Christ, and develop the highest type of character--not to assume not merely to interest not even to teach good moral lessons. True we want to awaken curiosity, stimulate to a desire for knowledge, and gratify both by furnishing truth in its most inviting dress. But curiosity and a desire for knowledge are only the lowest and weakest of motives to be addressed. Conscience is stronger than the curiosity, and the Holy Spirit creates a hungering and thirsting of souls, which infinitely exceeds all natural desire for information. In short, we must not forget that 'the excellency of the power is of God.'<sup>1</sup>

A year later in The Evangel it was suggested that the Sunday school teacher should have "distinctness of aims...He should fix upon certain definite ends to be accomplished, and then keep these steadily before him...Let the teacher aim distinctly to teach something...Teaching is making some one know what he did not know before."<sup>2</sup>

From time to time suggestions to Sunday school teachers were published in The Evangel. In 1869 nine suggestions were published which were expected to help the teacher in his teaching:

1. Never permit a scholar to be absence more than one Sunday.
2. Upon receiving new scholars to your class, visit their homes at once--even accompanying them on the dismission of their first session.
3. Become acquainted with the parents of all your scholars invite them to visit the school, and in every way strive to do them good.
4. Promote punctuality in the scholars by being punctual yourself.
5. Maintain order in your class but do it by the law of love.
6. Interest your class by carefully studying the lesson by familiarizing yourself and by earnestness in teaching.
7. Allow no unemployed moment in any session; but always have some Scripture topic or experience with which to improve any unoccupied time.
8. Visit your scholars at least once every month; and when-ever an opportunity offers converse, pray with them personally.
9. Pray for each member of your class everyday and in all things let your motto be - prayer.<sup>3</sup>

Teachers were expected to carry through certain duties. One of the

1. The Evangel, Vol. IV, No. 7, 4/4/61

2. Ibid

3. The Evangel, Vol. IV, No. 3, 2/7/61, p. 2, Col. 4

4. The Evangel, Vol. IV, No. 4, 2/21/61

5. The Evangel, Vol. IV, No. 5, 3/7/61

first duties was to "pray for souls." However he must

first have been taught of God; first prayed for and received the blessing of God and the aid of His Spirit. He should intercede for each by name...Teachers should never lose sight of the ultimate object of all Sunday School instruction--the salvation of the souls of their scholars; this should be the burden of their prayer.<sup>1</sup>

#### Second, evangelization

the teacher should work for souls--work independently of all help but God's. You are individually responsible. Be not satisfied with preaching to your class, seek private interviews, by visitation, by cultivating a reciprocal social relation...Always be at your post <sup>2</sup> on a rainy Sunday; it may afford you a rare opportunity.

#### Third, visitation

Teachers should visit their classes...That the usefulness of the Sunday school instruction depends very much upon the amount of visitation performed by the teachers is no less true. The teacher will also be assisted in his work by studying the character of his scholars at their homes. It is the teacher's duty to follow up his Sunday instructions to his class with his personal influence...He can by coming home to them, impress those life-governing, character forming principles, which tend to shape the destiny of his class more lastingly than it is possible to do in the school hour...<sup>3</sup>

#### Fourth, attendance

Teachers should be regular and punctual in their attendance. But it is not enough that the teacher be present every Sunday--he should be there promptly at the opening of the school...Finally, if the teacher would be useful, he would be loved and remembered by his class, if he would be honored by the church, if he would be rewarded by the Head of the <sup>4</sup> Church, he must be regular and punctual in his attendance.

### 3. Discipline in the Sunday School

The Sunday school was expected to be a model of perfect discipline, but it was not the same disciplinary law as in the public school or in the home. The law in the Sunday school was expected to be inforced by love. "The Sunday School may have its laws, but they must be the laws of kindness, Its officers may govern the children, but it must be by an influence, not by coercion...These laws should be few and simple."<sup>5</sup> The conception of

1. The Evangel, Vol. IV. No. 5, 3/7/61

2. Brown, History of Religious Education in Recent Times, p. 76

"good order" in the Sunday school is quoted below from The Evangel:

All should be in their places, the teachers seated with their classes, all ready to unite in the opening hymn, all ready to engage in prayer...A serious, solemn spirit, should pervade the opening exercises, and then it sheds its hallowed influence over the whole occasion. The object is all-important; a dealing with immortal beings upon eternal concerns; an earnest zeal should generate a feeling, magnetic and controlling, holding the attention of the children from the beginning to the end of the exercises. No jingling of the Superintendent's bell, or scolding, or threatening can possibly maintain good discipline in the Sunday school. Every teacher must take care of his own class; then all will be orderly, and quiet will reign throughout the school. On entering the work, the teacher should know the love and rules of the school and make it his first duty to impress them upon his class. There must be the personal example prompted by religious character, and mutual confidence between all, begotten by an affectionate kindness of heart.<sup>1</sup>

This idea of discipline was dominant and prevailing in the thought of that time. The educational leaders believed that the best way to secure a teaching situation was through absolute discipline of the child.

#### 4. Class Division of the Sunday School

Dividing the Sunday school into specific groups for study depended upon the immediate situation, and some of the ideas concerning the grading of the pupils may seem strange to us. At the General Sunday School Convention of 1862 R. W. Collins made the suggestion that the Sunday school pupils should be divided into four parts calling them divisions not classes:

1. Infant Division to be strictly infants. Sixty or more can be efficiently managed by one teacher and an assistant.
2. The Elementary Division will include all those scholars who can read the Scriptures. Eight to twelve may be in the classes.
3. The Scripture Division will include all those scholars who can read the Scriptures. Eight to twelve may be in a class.
4. The Senior Division will comprehend those scholars who are above the age of fourteen. Fifteen to twenty may be in the classes.<sup>2</sup>

The Sunday school leaders in California in 1860 suggested that the

1. The Evangel, Vol. III, No. 18, 12/20/60, p. 2, col. 5

2. The Home Mission Record, Vol. III, No. 17, Col. 1, 1/51

division of children be made according to ages and attainments:

Children should be separated and combined into classes in as strict accordance with their relative ages and attainments as the circumstances will admit, and in the assignment of classes, the strictest regard should be paid to the adaptation of the teacher to his or her class. This, with the entire management of the school, devolves solely upon the superintendent.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the Sunday school depended a great deal upon the personality of the superintendent and whether or not he was capable of handling the Sunday school situation. The superintendent was entirely responsible for the progress of the school. The idea of a religious education committee had not developed, and the success of the school rested solely on the ability of the superintendent. The development of the Baptist Sunday school movement in the California churches was in a large measure due to the intelligence and influence of the pioneer Sunday school superintendents.

##### 5. Architecture and equipment of the Sunday School

The early Sunday schools were held in the homes of persons. This is particularly true of the Sunday schools begun in England and in the Eastern States before the Sunday school had the approval of the church. On the frontier not only Sunday schools but church services were held in the homes of friends. The first Baptist Sunday school in California was held in the home of C. L. Ross, a Baptist layman in San Francisco. In the Home Mission Record for January, 1851, Mrs. Charlotta A. Grennell wrote an interesting account of the Sunday school held in San Jose at time of her arrival in the fall of 1850:

It is held in a small room of Rev. Mr. Brierly's home. On one side upon a bench sat seven little girls, and on the other about the same number of boys. They were instructed by three male teachers, no female teacher had yet been there...<sup>2</sup>

A number of the first buildings and homes built in early California

1. See page 65

2. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1856, p. 7

were very crude structures. Building materials were scarce and particularly wood. A few lumber mills had been established, but there remained the problem of transportation and labor. The early churches were built of rough, hewed logs or boards. The roofs were usually canvass, and later as the demand for lumber increased, it was possible to obtain shingles. The walls inside were made of canvass or some kind of heavy cloth. As the establishment of Baptist churches increased and progressed, the buildings were improved, and provision for the Sunday school was made. The majority of churches held the Sunday school in the auditorium of the church building for the "assembly period". The adults and older young people remained in the auditorium for class instruction, while the children went down to the basement. Individual class rooms did not develop until the end of the nineteenth century.

#### IV. The Teacher Training Movement in California

##### 1. Sunday School Teacher's Meetings

Quite early in the development of the Sunday school movement in California Baptist history there was a recognition of a need of some type of teacher training. One of the earliest methods of teacher training was the "normal or recruiting Bible class," which has been discussed before.<sup>1</sup> The value of Sunday school teachers' meetings was early realized and urged upon the churches by the Sunday school committee. In 1856 it was recommended that there should be an "establishment of a monthly concert of prayer for Sabbath Schools, on the second Sabbath evening in each month, at which statistics and addresses may be given to incite and encourage all in the enterprise."<sup>2</sup>

No further mention is made of teachers' meetings until 1880, and the first recommendation for teachers' meetings was not made until 1885. The Sunday school committee in its report to the Central Baptist Association

1. Central Baptist Association, Minutes, 1885, p. 18

2. Ibid, 1886, p. 16

3. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1890, pp.30-31

4. Brown, History of Religious Education in Recent Times, pp.54-55

5. Ibid, p. 69

recommended "the holding of teachers' meetings every week," and they further recommended the holding of "Sunday school prayer meetings occasionally, as well as prayer meetings for the Sunday school."<sup>1</sup> The following year the committee were quite emphatic about the holding of regular teachers' prayer meetings "at least once a month."<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the teachers' meetings was to help prepare the teachers in teaching the Sunday school lesson for the following Sunday, in order that they might have a thorough preparation for their class-work. The Sunday school committee before the General Baptist Convention of 1893 made the following recommendation concerning teachers' meetings:

We earnestly recommend the Teachers' Meetings. Besides the study of the lesson, let it be a kind of a normal school, where young teachers may be trained so that they may efficiently fill vacancies, and take the place of those who are falling out of the ranks. We believe no more important work in relation to our Baptist interests on this coast lies before us than of properly training the youth in the principles of righteousness and leading them by God's help to the Cross.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Development of the Sunday School Institutes

No other secular movement in America has influenced the Sunday school as much as the Teacher Training movement which began in 1832 when Rev. S. R. Hall of Concord, Vermont, established the first teacher-training school. It was later sponsored by Horace Mann in Massachusetts,<sup>4</sup> and by 1860 the movement had spread as far west as Minnesota. A proposal for Normal Sunday School Instruction was made in 1847 by Rev. D. P. Kidder, D.D. who made a plea in its behalf, but progress was very slow,<sup>5</sup> although a few schools were conducted. The Sunday school leader who saw the value of the movement, was John H. Vincent "who in a report before the Conference of the Sunday School Committee of the Rock River Conference held in Chicago in 1860" recommended the establishment of an Institute for Sunday school teachers "conducted by our ablest Sunday

1. Brown, A History of Religious Education in Recent Times, pp.54-55

2. Lobb, M. E. History of the Teacher Training Movement, p. 48

3. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1875, p. 10

4. Ibid, 1878, p. 11

Sunday School educators."<sup>1</sup>

Vincent went ahead and made definite plans for the establishment of Sunday School Institutes, but progress in this direction was hindered until after the Civil War. However, Vincent continued to experiment with his idea and to lay the foundations for the actual establishment of Institutes after the war.

The first Sunday School Institute was held on April 16-17, 1861, in the Galena District of the Rock River Conference in Illinois. "In 1864 Vincent urged the Cook County Sunday School Association to form a permanent Sunday School Institute."<sup>2</sup> His suggestion was adopted and during the following winter, in Chicago, a course of lectures and exercises was given.

Sunday School Institutes made their appearance in California in 1875. In that year the Sunday school committee made a recommendation to the San Francisco Association regarding the establishment of Institutes within the Association:

We recommend that this Association appoint four Sunday-School Institutes, to be held in different sections of the Association at such points as will best accommodate the churches; and that a committee of three be appointed <sup>3</sup> to make all necessary arrangements, including programmes.

Whether the Sunday School Institutes were actually held during the year is hard to determine, as the Minutes of the San Francisco Association for 1876 do not record any such Institutes being held. At the San Francisco Association meeting two years later, it was recommended:

At each Annual meeting of the Association every Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning shall be devoted to a Sunday-school Institute. Each church in the Association that can do so, should hold at least one Sunday-school Institute during the year.<sup>4</sup>

The following year the San Francisco Association made a recommendation to the State Convention that at its annual meeting it provide a "Sunday School Institute for all Baptist Sunday School workers and teachers in the State," and further, "that, if possible, one day of the Convention be set

1. San Francisco Baptist Association, Minutes, 1879, p. 15

2. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1882, p. 18

3. Central Baptist Association, Minutes, 1883, p. 19

4. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, 1888

5. Ibid, 1889, p. 21

6. Ibid, 1893, p.

apart to this all-important department of Christian and Church work."<sup>1</sup>

The first Sunday School Institute of which there is definite record under Baptist auspices in California was held in March 1882 under the leadership of G. S. Abbott, and it was recommended that Institutes be held the following year, one in southern California, one in northern California, and two around and in the Bay area.<sup>2</sup> The following year a motion was made to the Association with regard to the Sunday School Institutes:

Resolved, That it is the wish of this Association that Sunday School Institutes, such as were recommended last year, shall be held during the coming Associational year, and that Brother Abbott be requested to take the directing of them.<sup>3</sup>

In 1888 the Sunday School Committee of the State Convention made a recommendation regarding the value and purpose of the Institutes:

The holding of Sunday School Institutes, as a means for bringing Sunday School workers together for consultation, for giving them enlarged views of this work, and developing the best methods for its prosecution.<sup>4</sup>

The Sunday School Institutes held under the leadership of G. S. Abbott during the following year were reported as a success, and the Sunday school committee recommended the Institutes to be held during the coming year throughout the state.<sup>5</sup>

The Sunday School Institutes gradually brought gratifying results to the religious leaders. The Sunday school committee in its report to the State Convention stated that there had been "an advance made in the methods of instruction. Teachers are giving more attention to Bible study and how they may best present the great truths and doctrines so as to reach the best results in leading children to Christ. This is due largely to the Institutes held by our Sunday-school Missionary, Rev. G. S. Abbott, D. D.<sup>6</sup> and his consecrated and talented wife."

1. General Baptist Convention of California, Minutes, p. 18

2. Ibid, 1886, p. 16

## V. Sunday School Concerts

In a country where there was little opportunity for social life and the development of culture something had to be developed which would be a substitute for the cultural advantages of the eastern states. The religious leaders felt that the church was the center of a person's life and it was soon realized by them that the church had a responsibility in providing a certain amount of cultural education. As a result "Sunday School Concerts" were organized. In the General Baptist Convention of California the churches were urged to hold Sunday School concerts quarterly, but the concerts had to be "thoroughly sacred and religious in their nature," and if properly conducted they were considered to be "of as great moral power and benefit as the usual preaching service, but they should never be made mere entertainments. By means of a Sunday School concert a class of persons may be reached and brought out to church which rarely attend divine service."<sup>1</sup> The Central Baptist Association in 1886 urged the Sunday Schools to hold "Sunday School concerts as often as once a quarter."<sup>2</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Baptist work began in California when Dr. & Mrs. O. C. Wheeler stepped off the boat in San Francisco and proceeded to attempt the organization of a Baptist church and Sunday school, which were organized in 1849. A year later plans were made for the establishment of an Association which consisted of three churches, each with a Sunday school. It was not long before churches and Sunday schools were organized in the Bay area, the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and Southern California. Gradually, as the need arose churches, Sunday schools and Associations were formed until in 1900 there were two State Conventions, thirteen Associations and one hundred and ninety-eight churches, whose total membership was eleven thousand

1. Southern California Baptist Convention, Minutes, 1900 and  
General Baptist Convention of Northern and Central California, Minutes,  
1900

four hundred and three persons. The two Conventions reported one hundred ninety-one Sunday schools whose total enrollment was ten thousand six hundred and one and an average attendance of nine thousand three hundred and fifty-six. Unfortunately the Mission Sunday schools did not report.<sup>1</sup>

Growth and development of Baptist effort in California would not have progressed if it had not been for the splendid leadership of O. C. Wheeler, C. L. Ross, J. L. Shuck, E. J. Willis, L. O. Grennell, G. S. Abbott and many others whose names appear in the minutes of the State Conventions, Associations and denominational papers. These men and other pioneers had a deep conviction and faith in the Cause of the Master, and although they did not succeed wholly in establishing a Baptist church or Sunday school in every community, they did lay foundations for future work. We cannot but admire and revere these heroic spirits.











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